

Theo Gregory: My Wilmington discretionary spending was justified

Theopalis K. Gregory, Sr. Published July 26, 2017



There is accountability and transparency with respect to City Council's discretionary funds. It is a process that my administration inherited.

I have personal knowledge that it had been in place under three presidents before my administration. The core process has always been the same with slight variation.

Read the story: [Questions raised about oversight of council discretionary funds](#)

The process is straightforward. Each councilperson is awarded a fund that they manage. This has only been under the previous two presidents.

Before that each councilperson approached the president if he or she had a public policy initiative or institution they wanted to support. That fund over the years has ranged from approximately \$7,000 to \$10,000.

The protocol has always required that a percentage of the funds be used for scholarships. Councilpersons use the balance to support policy initiatives or institutions they view as sustaining and advancing Wilmington.

Staff persons, in conjunction with the president, ensure the appropriateness of the expenditures within the rules. In doing so, we do not judge the matter's value.

OUR VIEW: [Council must fix its discretionary funds problem](#)

Secondly, the city council has an operating budget. There are two discretionary funds. I shall call these funds A and B.

Fund A is an administrative fund for items such as travel, fixed grants such as parades as well as purchasing tickets and ads.

All councilpersons have access to Fund A. It is managed by staff and the president. This fund is approximately \$55,000.

Next, is Fund B. For all presidents, it has ranged from approximately \$250,000-\$500,000.

Yes, the president and staff manage this fund. However, all councilpersons participate. Each president pushes his or her major policy initiative, as we are elected to do.

My initiative of ensuring that special needs youth have advocacy did not consume any more funds than the previous presidents, in fact, it may have been less. Therefore, yes, I am one of the architects for Education Voices, Inc, (EVI).

There was no city based entity before EVI. EVI made presentations before the Education Youth & Families Committee yearly. They received the annual report containing financials, budgets, mission statement, metrics, benchmarks and client testimonials.

More: [Some council members want greater transparency for the funds](#)

There has been a feeble suggestion that I remained connected to EVI. My policy position was that EVI, as a stand-alone nonprofit, should not be micromanaged or have government interference. We provided accountability oversight by requiring detailed reports.

Each grant over \$5,000 is audited by the city auditor. Yes, as council president, we rightfully partnered with EVI to do an education forum. And yes, I noted with pride while campaigning that it was a major policy initiative. No regrets!

The balance of Fund B is accessible to all councilpersons. They all participate in the awarding of the funds relating to policy and institutional initiatives they believed worthy, such as painting the overpass railroad bridge over I-95 and Conaty Park.

Further, tickets and ads supporting events are purchased using this fund. Staff ensures that all purchases are appropriate. The president gives the final approval. Councilpersons cannot use funds they manage for this purpose.

Let's chat about my usage of discretionary funds. My life of public service has focused on educating, developing and training our young folk.

Related: [The current council president has also defended the funds](#)

To advance a people we must educate, develop and train them. They must be given access to opportunities to be able to compete.

Economic development without human development is for somebody else, other than the poor and disadvantaged of all races.

So what have I done? Let's see, I led the creation of The Eden Park athletic field, costing \$370,000; helped get the P.S. DuPont field renovated two times; allocated \$2 million for renovation of the Hicks Anderson Community Center; was the architect for Greater Wilmington Youth Athletic Association (GWYAA), an urban youth athletic association; was part of the Police Athletic League of Wilmington's birth and development, securing an initial \$1.2 million; was architect of Moyer Academy; started Education Voice Inc., etc.

And, yes I served on the Police Athletic League of Wilmington's board and chaired it at one time. No regrets, proud to be a Wilmingtonian.

Now, let's chat about Student Disabilities Advocate, Inc. Thanks, PALW, for partnering with us as SDA secured its 501(c)(3) status. Thanks for taking SDA in as a pilot program as SDA proved itself.

We expanded the EVI concept to include homeless and bullied students. SDA is consistent with the policy recommendations of the CDC report as to what is needed for our community.

We are advocating for special needs, homeless and bullied public school children ensuring that they get, as required by law, a free and appropriate public education.

As always, blessed I am.

Theopalis K. Gregory is the former president of the Wilmington City Council.

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Susan Arruda ·

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What about the \$28,000 for Georgetown University, as was reported in an earlier article? How does this help the people in the city of Wilmington?

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Peter Meisel ·

University of Delaware

Me, me, me.....

Just sayin

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Denise Tolliver

Consistent over reign of multiple Council Presidents same issues persist and most glaringly 3 Priority Schools within city limits. Moyer is a failed charter school. With 11 thousand student city residents the impact of spending \$600,000 over which former council president Gregory almost went unnoticed. Credit goes to councilman Guy for igniting the News Journal investigative report. [#DefiningBlackCommunity](#)

Theo K Gregory Sr. ·

City Council President at Wilmington City Council

Folk , I know of no \$ 28,000 that went to Georgetown University. Yes , I had to talk about myself as the attack was in part on me and the process I inherited. Finally, the EVI funds were featured in an article in May 2013 .Also , if you read this piece it speaks to the accountability and transparency. The article fails to note that the annual reports submitted to the Council at the Education Youth and Families Committee were then distributed to ALL Councilpersons. Also the meetings were aired on WITN CHANNEL 22 live , with multiple reruns . People who know me are surprised at my humility and reluctance to talk about myself . Moyer did not fail . Moyer was the victim of politics . It was all about positioning for RTTT funds . Now RTTT is the real failure . WITH THE STATE TAKE OVER FOR A YEAR AND THEN PASSING IT ON TO ANOTHER NONPROFIT THAT WAS THE FAILURE. State announced that they could do it better . We had 500 kids . The take over folk could not get 200 kids . But that's not the measure of success . But the mere 200 is a measure of failure. I'm thinking about writing a book. I have a box of documents confirming the State's dirty deed . As always, blessed I am .

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Denise Tolliver

Moyer is a failed charter school validated by former council president Gregory rant reply. EVI 2014 IRS 990EZ Line21 shows over \$110,000 Excess! 110 One-Thousand Dollars scholarships could have been awarded to City of Wilmington graduation high school seniors. [#URBlessed?](#) [#DefiningBlackCommunity](#)

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Peter Meisel ·

University of Delaware

Curious how many other elected officials in Wilmington created a "non-profit" and pushed HUNDREDS of THOUSANDS of taxpayers money into it? I remember Shabazz(?) being quoted as saying she was unaware of the amount of the expenditures. I guess what I find interesting is that none of the other councilpersons had any worthwhile ideas that warranted support beyond the \$8000 they had to ask for???

Moyer was a failure. If you were in the classrooms where those poor kids ended up, you would have seen it. Those kids were promised a bill of goods and the only people that got anything were the people getting paychecks.
Own it.