

<b>Respondent Name</b>
William Armacost
<b>Complainant Name</b>
Karen Hogan
<b>Complaint Description</b>
<p>Karenlhogan (Thu, 29 Jul 2021 at 5:22 PM)</p> <p>Mr. Armacost, who, though not currently running for office, is listed as one of Donnie Hall's candidates on the Independent Advisory Association "Our Candidates" website page(<a href="http://restoreclallam.com">restoreclallam.com</a>). Mr. Armacost seems to have attempted to work around RCW 42.17A.555 by reserving the council chambers for the Donnie Hall-hosted forum using his sequimwa.gov email address, stating "We would be having a candidate forum." (jpg of file attached).</p> <p>That leaves the impression that the mayor was requesting the reservation for a city-sponsored candidate forum.</p>
<b>What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?</b>
<p>The mayor's request to reserve city council chambers gives the impression that the forum for which he is requesting it is city-sanctioned event for meeting candidates for city council. It is not. The forum for which he is requesting the reservation dates would be hosted by Donnie Hall, presenting himself as the Independent Advisory Association (IAA) (<a href="http://restoreclallam.com">restoreclallam.com</a>.) The event is a campaign event masquerading as a non-political candidates' forum.</p> <p>On the IAA's website (<a href="http://restoreclallam.com">restoreclallam.com</a>) it states that one of the reasons for its existence is that the "The Clallam County Republican Party is not positioned to effectively aid candidates in nonpartisan offices."</p> <p>Mr. Hall is on the Executive Committee of the Clallam County Republican party as the Campaign and Strategy Committee Chair.</p> <p>The forum is organized so that Donnie Hall, acting as the IAA, would develop the questions for the candidates without input from the public. In the IAA version of a forum, it makes up the questions, identifies the moderator, and doesn't allow any public input into questions. In other words, the IAA controls what the public can hear from the candidates without regard for what the public actually wants to know.</p> <p>Moreover, hosting the forum in Council Chambers gives an advantage to the incumbents (3 of the 5 are incumbents via appointment rather than election).</p> <p>The IAA website lists candidates running for City Council (Keith Larkin, Mike Pence, Sarah Kincaid, Darel Ness, and Patrick Day), as well as William Armacost as "Our Candidates" with links to their individual candidate page (<a href="https://www.restoreclallam.com/our-candidates">https://www.restoreclallam.com/our-candidates</a>).</p>

<b>List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence may be found</b>
<p>Email exchange between the mayor and city employee who reserves the city council chamber.</p> <p>Screenshot of email Donnie Hall sent to candidates notifying them of the IAA forum dates for the 2021 Sequim Council election.</p> <p>Screenshot of email response from Donnie Hall to Lowell Rathbun's questions. Rathbun is a city council candidate who is not supported by Donnie Hall</p> <p>Screenshot of Donnie Hall response to City Attorney (MSW file)</p>
<b>List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them</b>
<p>Karen Abbott</p> <p>Lowell Rathbun</p>
<b>Certification (Complainant)</b>
<p>I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.</p>

## Karen Abbott

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**From:** William Armacost  
**Sent:** Friday, July 23, 2021 11:15 AM  
**To:** Karen Abbott  
**Subject:** Re: Council Chamber rental

Hi Karen ,

Thank you . Have a great weekend .

Mayor Armacost

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**From:** Karen Abbott <kabbott@sequimwa.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 23, 2021 11:00 AM  
**To:** William Armacost <warmacost@sequimwa.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Council Chamber rental

Ok, thank you for the info. I will block out those dates and times for the Council Chambers.

Karen Abbott  
Administrative Assistant II - City Managers Office  
360-582-2454  
[kabbott@sequimwa.gov](mailto:kabbott@sequimwa.gov)  
City of Sequim, 152 W. Cedar St., Sequim WA 98382



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**From:** William Armacost <warmacost@sequimwa.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 23, 2021 10:56 AM  
**To:** Karen Abbott <kabbott@sequimwa.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Council Chamber rental

Hi Karen ,

The times for renting the Council Chambers would be from 6:00 To 9:00 PM  
We would be having a candidate forum. We used the chambers for the same event two years ago when myself and Deputy Mayor Ferrell were running for office . With five council seats up for election the public will appreciate the opportunity to hear from the candidates .  
I thank you in advance for your help .

Mayor Armacost

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**From:** Karen Abbott <[kabbott@sequimwa.gov](mailto:kabbott@sequimwa.gov)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 22, 2021 3:44 PM  
**To:** William Armacost <[warmacost@sequimwa.gov](mailto:warmacost@sequimwa.gov)>  
**Subject:** Council Chamber rental

Good afternoon. I see you would like to reserve the Council Chamber for August 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> and again on October 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. Are these full day rentals? And, what is the event?

Thank you.

Karen Abbott  
Administrative Assistant II - City Managers Office  
360-582-2454  
[kabbott@sequimwa.gov](mailto:kabbott@sequimwa.gov)  
City of Sequim, 152 W. Cedar St., Sequim WA 98382



**From:** donald hall <[halld98382@gmail.com](mailto:halld98382@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 28, 2021 9:16 AM

**To:** Kristina Nelson-Gross <[knelson-gross@sequimwa.gov](mailto:knelson-gross@sequimwa.gov)>

**Cc:** Karen Abbott <[kabbott@sequimwa.gov](mailto:kabbott@sequimwa.gov)>; Charisse Deschenes <[cdeschenes@sequimwa.gov](mailto:cdeschenes@sequimwa.gov)>; [ElectVickiLowe@gmail.com](mailto:ElectVickiLowe@gmail.com); [rathbunforcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:rathbunforcouncil@gmail.com); [kincaid@olypen.com](mailto:kincaid@olypen.com); [larkinforsequim@gmail.com](mailto:larkinforsequim@gmail.com); [patrickdayforsequim@gmail.com](mailto:patrickdayforsequim@gmail.com); [kathyallforsequim@gmail.com](mailto:kathyallforsequim@gmail.com); [rachelandersonforsequim@gmail.com](mailto:rachelandersonforsequim@gmail.com); [reelectjanisseforsequim@gmail.com](mailto:reelectjanisseforsequim@gmail.com); [ness4citycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:ness4citycouncil@gmail.com); [mdpence@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mdpence@sbcglobal.net); James McEntire <[jmcentire1@wavecable.com](mailto:jmcentire1@wavecable.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Candidate Forums

Hi Kristina,

Thanks for the reminder to us and all candidates. We in the Independent Advisory Association are working hard, to not only make our forums nonpolitical in fact, but also in appearance as well. We strive to do so through a structural approach which imparts a nonpolitical, information gathering character to the forum in spite of any personalities involved. In addition to fielding successful forums, we hope to serve as a model for other sponsors of forums whose structures leave them open to criticism of bias and partisanship. The following ground rules help to ensure our desired outcome.

1. No targeted questions. - All questions are asked of all candidates in the same manner.
2. Questions provided in advance. - We see no purpose achieved by opening the floor up to the possibility of "gotcha" questions.
3. Adequate time to answer. - We currently allow 3 minutes for candidate responses although we are evaluating shrinking that time to two and one half minutes. A 1 minute response only tests a candidate's ability to obfuscate.
4. No questions from the audience. - Our goal with this point is to take the moderator out of the loop as much as possible.

With regard to the last point, we believe that, while audience participation is a worthy goal, the ability to pick and choose audience generated questions and to interpret those questions places too much discretion in the moderator's hands, leaving her or him open to the charge of partisanship. There is currently a concern among the candidates for this forum over who we would choose for moderator. We want to make that choice as neutral as possible. In fact, you would make an excellent moderator. Your duties would consist of reading the questions, making sure that any give and take among the candidates stays under control and keeping an eye on the audience. Your position on the City Government Staff would help to ensure that the event was regarded as nonpolitical. Please let us know if you are interested in moderating any one or more of our sessions.

I would like to note that one popular forum sponsor in the area has adopted two of our ground rules since we started: no targeted questions and adequate time to answer. We hope that others are willing to follow along.

I do have one question/request. We would like to make a table in the back of the room available to all candidates to put out their literature on an equal basis. If that can't be accommodated, we understand but we feel that by making a table available to all we are acting to "provide information" rather than making a "political" statement.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

With warm regards,

Donnie Hall  
Founding principal,  
Independent Advisory Association



From: **donald hall** <[restoreclallam@gmail.com](mailto:restoreclallam@gmail.com)>

Date: Sun, Jul 25, 2021, 5:02 PM

Subject: Save the dates.

To: donald hall <[halld98382@gmail.com](mailto:halld98382@gmail.com)>, James McEntire <[jmcentire1@wavecable.com](mailto:jmcentire1@wavecable.com)>,

Michael Dashiell <[mdashiell@sequimgazette.com](mailto:mdashiell@sequimgazette.com)>, <[PFisher@radio-pacific.com](mailto:PFisher@radio-pacific.com)>

Greetings candidates,

The Independent Advisory Association is pleased to announce its forum dates for the 2021 Sequim City Council elections. The dates are as follows:

Forum 1 Aug 24,25

Forum 2 Oct 19,20

The Forums will run from 6:30 to 8:00 every evening. They will be held in Council Chambers at the Sequim City Hall. Each forum will be held over two nights due to the large number of contests this election year. Each candidate will participate only one night in each forum.

The format for the forums will be the same as the highly praised forum previously held by the Association for the 2019 Sequim City Hall elections. Each candidate will be given 3 minutes for their opening statement. Following this, a series of questions will be asked of the candidates. Each candidate will be given 3 minutes for his/her response. Following this, each candidate will be given 1 minute for rebuttal/followup. The moderator will ask his own followup question if he feels any answer is incomplete. Questions will be provided to the candidates approximately one week in advance of the forum. There will be no audience questions. There will be no targeted questions aimed at specific candidates.

Please advise by return email, your availability for the dates of the two forums. Once your responses are received, candidates will be assigned to specific days of the forums by random lot, depending upon their availability.

Thank you and looking forward to two very informative forums.

**Donnie Hall**

Founding Principal

Independent Advisory Association

[www.restoreclallam.com](http://www.restoreclallam.com)

[restoreclallam@gmail.com](mailto:restoreclallam@gmail.com)

971.232.2388

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **donald hall** <[halld98382@gmail.com](mailto:halld98382@gmail.com)>

Date: Sun, Jul 25, 2021, 7:42 PM

Subject: Re: Save the dates.

To: Lowell Rathbun <[rathbunforcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:rathbunforcouncil@gmail.com)>

Cc: donald hall <[restoreclallam@gmail.com](mailto:restoreclallam@gmail.com)>, James McEntire <[jmcentire1@wavecable.com](mailto:jmcentire1@wavecable.com)>, Michael Dashiell <[mdashiell@sequimgazette.com](mailto:mdashiell@sequimgazette.com)>, <[PFisher@radio-pacific.com](mailto:PFisher@radio-pacific.com)>

Mr. Rathbun,

Thanks for your quick response.

In answer to your questions:

- 1.The Association will choose the moderator. Several candidates are being considered.
- 2.Due to seating limitations, attendance will be limited to City of Sequim residents and local media.
- 3.Pending availability, we will make every effort to have candidates appear alongside their opponents.
4. As you can see, KONP and the PDN have been invited.
5. We have no capability for recording the forums. We do not prohibit anyone recording them provided that they are not disruptive in doing so.
6. After all candidates answer the question posed by the moderator, each candidate will be afforded a one minute rebuttal/followup. Your followup may take the form of a question if you so desire. There will be no compulsion that your question be answered.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Respectfully,

Donnie Hall

On Sun, Jul 25, 2021 at 6:44 PM Lowell Rathbun <[rathbunforcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:rathbunforcouncil@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Mr. Hall,

I will be pleased to attend, most likely on both dates.

I have some questions:

1. Who will be the moderator?
2. May we bring guests?
3. Will I appear alongside my opponent, Keith Larkin?
4. Will the media be present?
5. Will these forums be recorded?
6. Will we be able to ask our own questions?

Regards,