



ROBERT G. CASSILLY

Harford County Executive

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Harford County Executive's Response to Councilman Penman's Allegations

BEL AIR, Md., (July 31, 2023) – Harford County's Information Communication Technology Policy and County Issued Cell Phones Policy make abundantly clear that no user of electronic devices issued by the County has any expectation of privacy as to information conveyed through the use of such information technology and that the County has the right at any time to inspect all electronically stored information on such technology devices.

On or about May 23, 2023, Councilman Aaron Penman made public allegations of an alleged misappropriation of seven million dollars in County funds. Councilman Penman refused to cooperate with the Executive Branch's inquiry regarding his allegations.

The County Director of Administration, upon learning of Councilman Penman's allegations, undertook a comprehensive internal investigation to ascertain whether there was any basis to suspect misuse of county funds. Having failed to find any evidence of improper activity, the Director of Administration, on May 30, 2023, directed county staff to review county servers for communications between Councilman Penman and Sheriff Gahler, Sheriff Gahler's Information Officer and Campaign Manager, Erik Robey, and Councilman Penman's campaign advisor, Joseph Snee, in order to exhaust a search of the County server for the most likely recipients of communications from Councilman Penman concerning his allegations of misappropriation of funds by Executive Branch members. The requested search disclosed no basis for the serious allegations being leveled by Councilman Penman.

It is well within the authority of the Executive Branch, when faced with allegations of wrongdoing by its own directors or employees, to conduct an examination of the electronic communications located on Harford County servers of the Councilmember accusing a County employee of improper use of County funds. At no time did the Executive Branch monitor Councilman Penman's emails or cell phone. The examination conducted was appropriately limited in order to provide the level of confidentiality necessary to support an effective investigation of an alleged misuse of county funds.

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