

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

DATE: July 10, 2024

TO: Sarah Leach – sentinelleach@gmail.com

FROM: Rebecca Nelson, Director and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officer  
Michigan State University FOIA Office

*Rebecca Nelson*

SUBJECT: FOIA Response

This is written in response to the FOIA request that you emailed to this Office on June 17, 2024.

Records responsive to your request accompany this letter. Cellular telephone numbers and certain other personal data have been redacted under Section 13(1)(a) of the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (MIFOIA), which provides for the withholding of “Information of a personal nature if public disclosure of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of an individual’s privacy.” University email addresses have been redacted under Sections 13(1)(u), (y), and (z), which allow for the withholding of information related to the ongoing security of a public body. No fee will be assessed for this processing of your request.



**FREEDOM OF  
INFORMATION ACT  
OFFICE**

**Michigan State  
University**

408 West Circle Drive  
Room 1 Olds Hall  
East Lansing, MI 48824  
517-353-3929  
Fax: 517-353-1794  
foia@msu.edu  
<http://foia.msu.edu>

The MIFOIA provides that when a public body denies all or a portion of a request, the requester may do one of the following: (1) submit an appeal of the determination to the head of the public body; or (2) commence a civil action in the court of claims to compel the public body’s disclosure of the records. If you wish to seek judicial review of any denial, you must do so within 180 days of the date of this letter. If the court of claims orders disclosure of all or a portion of the public record(s) to which you have been denied access, you may receive attorneys’ fees and, in certain circumstances, damages under the MIFOIA. Should you choose to file an appeal with the University regarding this response to your request, you must submit a written communication to this Office expressly stating that it is an “appeal” of this response. In your appeal, please state what records you believe should have been disclosed to you. You must also state the reasons you believe any denial of your MIFOIA request should be reversed. This Office will arrange for the processing and review of your appeal. Pursuant to Section 4(4) of the MIFOIA, the University’s procedures and guidelines for processing MIFOIA requests can be found at <http://foia.msu.edu>.

Attachments  
MSUF058324

**From:** Kelly, James [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 9, 2024 8:00 AM  
**To:** Joe Moss  
**Cc:** John Gibbs; Korpak, Michael  
**Subject:** RE: Request for Contact From Sentinel

Thanks Joe.

We will look forward to seeing it on the agenda released on Friday.  
I appreciate your action on this item.

Regards,

JK

**From:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 8, 2024 6:28 PM  
**To:** Kelly, James [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** John Gibbs <jgibbs@miottawa.org>; Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Request for Contact From Sentinel

Hi James and Scott,

Thanks for reaching out. Yes, the contract is slated for the next board agenda. I appreciate you both taking time to meet with commissioners to explain more about MSU Extension. We look forward to learning more and working with Scott in 2024.

Have a great evening,

Joe Moss  
Chairperson  
Ottawa County Commissioner  
District 5  
P: [REDACTED]

---

**From:** Kelly, James [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 8, 2024 4:05 PM  
**To:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Cc:** John Gibbs <jgibbs@miottawa.org>; Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Request for Contact From Sentinel

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Hi Joe,

It seems the issue of our delayed contract becoming a more public issue is on the verge of breaking out. We had a request from the Holland Sentinel to provide some insight as to why our contract was being delayed. They referenced in their email both the connection with Ottawa Food and the connection to Christian's candidacy as the potential reason for the delay. I would love to be able to respond to that request saying that the contract is due to be on the upcoming agenda and that we do not anticipate any issues at this point.

We will hold off on responding to the Sentinel but would like to send them a positive response as soon as possible. Please let me know if there has been any developments, one way or the other, as soon as possible.

Regards,

JLK  
James Kelly

District Director (Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana)  
Michigan State University Extension  
209 E. Apple Ave.  
Muskegon, MI 49442  
C: [REDACTED]  
O: 231-724-4732

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<https://www.facebook.com/jameskellymsu>

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**From:** Allison Miedema <amiedema@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 7, 2023 12:15 PM  
**To:** Kelly, James; Jordan Epperson; Joe Moss  
**Cc:** Korpak, Michael  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting tomorrow

The items you mentioned below look good to me, James. I would also like a breakdown of the MSU Extension budget – for example, what are the highest priorities of MSU Extension in Ottawa County based on funding and how priorities are determined.

Thank you so much!  
Allison

**From:** Kelly, James [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 7, 2023 6:21  
**To:** Allison Miedema <amiedema@miottawa.org>; Jordan Epperson <jepperson@miottawa.org>; Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Cc:** Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting tomorrow

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Allison,

Thanks for the update...we are looking forward to the conversation.

Based on our previous correspondence I put together the following rough agenda. If you or Joe are looking for additional information on any specific topic please let me know and we will do our best to have that available this afternoon.

- What falls under MSU Extension along the lines of work that is done.
- Who MSU Extension partners within Ottawa County and roles
- What the county pays for regarding MSU Extension.
- How is the word getting out to the community (communication)
- What the role of county commissioner has looked like in the past on this advisory council and what it could look like. What meetings will I be invited to in the future?

Regards,

JLK  
James Kelly

District Director (Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Ottawa/Kent Interim)  
Michigan State University Extension  
1903 Marquette Ave.  
Muskegon, MI 49442  
C: [REDACTED]

O: 231-724-4732

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**From:** Allison Miedema <[amiedema@miottawa.org](mailto:amiedema@miottawa.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 6, 2023 10:05 PM

**To:** Kelly, James <[REDACTED]>; Jordan Epperson <[jepperson@miottawa.org](mailto:jepperson@miottawa.org)>; Joe Moss <[jmoss@miottawa.org](mailto:jmoss@miottawa.org)>

**Subject:** Meeting tomorrow

Hi James,

Commissioner Joe Moss and myself are both available to meet tomorrow at 3 p.m for the MSU Extension meeting with Scott and yourself.

Jordan- could you please reserve a conference room for 4 people?

Thank you so much!

Allison Miedema  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Allison Miedema <amiedema@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 7, 2023 12:11 PM  
**To:** Jordan Epperson  
**Cc:** Kelly, James; Joe Moss  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting tomorrow

Thank you, Jordan!

**From:** Jordan Epperson <jepperson@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 7, 2023 9:05 AM  
**To:** Allison Miedema <amiedema@miottawa.org>  
**Cc:** James Kelly [REDACTED]; Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting tomorrow

Conference Room D has been reserved for 3PM for 4 individuals.

Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to provide assistance.

Thank you,

Jordan Epperson | *Senior Executive Aide*  
Office of the Administrator  
Ottawa County  
12220 Fillmore Street | West Olive, Michigan 49460  
[Jepperson@miottawa.org](mailto:Jepperson@miottawa.org) | 616-738-4898



Ottawa County  
Where Freedom Rings

**From:** Jordan Epperson  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 7, 2023 7:58 AM  
**To:** Allison Miedema <amiedema@miottawa.org>  
**Cc:** James Kelly [REDACTED]; Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting tomorrow

Hi all,

I'll reserve a room ASAP and let you know which one.

Thank you,

Jordan Epperson | *Senior Executive Aide*  
Office of the Administrator  
Ottawa County  
12220 Fillmore Street | West Olive, Michigan 49460  
[Jepperson@miottawa.org](mailto:Jepperson@miottawa.org) | 616-738-4898



**Ottawa County**  
Where Freedom Rings

**From:** Allison Miedema <[amiedema@miottawa.org](mailto:amiedema@miottawa.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 6, 2023 10:05 PM

**To:** James Kelly <[REDACTED]>; Jordan Epperson <[jepperson@miottawa.org](mailto:jepperson@miottawa.org)>; Joe Moss <[jmoss@miottawa.org](mailto:jmoss@miottawa.org)>

**Subject:** Meeting tomorrow

Hi James,

Commissioner Joe Moss and myself are both available to meet tomorrow at 3 p.m for the MSU Extension meeting with Scott and yourself.

Jordan- could you please reserve a conference room for 4 people?

Thank you so much!

Allison Miedema  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** Kelly, James [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 5, 2024 4:00 PM  
**To:** Joe Moss; John Gibbs  
**Cc:** Shane, Matthew; Korpak, Michael  
**Subject:** MSU Extension - Ottawa County MOA  
**Attachments:** Ottawa County - Response to request.pdf

Joe,

Thanks for your time this afternoon, and for the open discussion regarding the status of the MSU Extension MOA for Ottawa County. As discussed, I have attached the formal response from Associate Director for MSU Extension, Matt Shane.

We take the requests of our county partners seriously. Our Extension leadership and University counsel reviewed your request to have us relocate Christian, and have determined that we are unable to implement requests that would violate an employee's rights to participate in political activities outside of their workdays and hours. There are multiple employee rights that we believe this action would potentially infringe.

1. First amendment –Because we are a governmental employer, staff have protection related to what they say as a private citizen about a matter of public concern.
2. Political persuasion – Taking action because of staffs political persuasion is prohibited under the Anti-Discrimination Policy (The claim might be that MSU gave in to demands by a group who was anti-Democrat).
3. Off-duty conduct/invasion of privacy – There is no employment policy that permits us to take this adverse action against an employee because of conduct that had nothing to do with his employment and on the basis of conduct that was separate from work on his own private time.

We strive to apply the law and our organizational policy in a manner that is defensible.

Based on our conversation today we are hopeful that you will allow the MSU Extension Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to be placed on the consent agenda for the January 16 board meeting , just as it was before it was pulled out between the unanimous approval of the Finance Committee and the November 21, 2023, board meeting.

Your commitment to a quick turnaround in providing a clear response to this situation is much appreciated as I believe the potential for this issue to become public is growing daily. As discussed this afternoon, we have had to pause the search for a new 4-H Program Coordinator for 4-H in Ottawa County, due to the uncertainty of our MOA. It is highly likely that the 4-H community will see this gap in coverage as unusual and will seek an explanation. We also have 13 staff who are aware of the MOA delay and are concerned about the stability of their employment. We will look for your response, on behalf of the board, next week.

Again, I would happily entertain any communication from other board members with any questions or concerns regarding the role of MSU Extension in Ottawa County.

Regards,

JLK  
James Kelly

District Director (Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana)  
Michigan State University Extension



209 E. Apple Ave.  
Muskegon, MI 49442  
C: [REDACTED]  
O: 231-724-4732

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January 5, 2024

To: Joe Moss, Ottawa County Board Chairman, and John Gibbs, Ottawa County Administrator  
Fr: Matt Shane, Associate Director of Michigan State University Extension  
Re: Chairperson Moss' Request for MSU Extension Employee Reassignment  
Cc: District Director, James Kelly, and District Director, Scott Korpak

---

District Directors Kelly and Korpak informed me of your request to reassign a current MSU Extension employee assigned to Ottawa County.

To assess the appropriateness of your request, I initially examined the meeting notes and conversation summaries supplied by Mr. Kelly and Mr. Korpak. I verified with them that the rationale behind your request for reassignment of this employee is grounded in our response to the individual's political activities. More precisely, the employee's involvement in speaking to local media on behalf of the Ottawa Food Board.

MSU Extension is mandated to maintain a non-political stance, in accordance with our mission to serve and educate all citizens, irrespective of their political affiliations. We too had reservations about this employee's political activities. Simultaneously, we acknowledged our commitment to uphold this employee's rights to engage in politics as an American citizen.

To decide on the course of action, we examined Michigan State University's Guidelines for Participation in Political Activities and Ballot Initiatives, along with Section 57 of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act, which provides clearly defined parameters for MSU Extension employees. Subsequently, we sought guidance from the University's General Counsel.

Given the information available to us, MSU Extension is unable to relocate this employee to a different location.

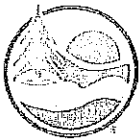
I understand that the result does not align with your initial request. However, considering the unanimous approval of the MOA at the November 7 Finance and Administration meeting and the successful collaboration we've maintained for the past 107 years, I hope that you will include the MOA in your January 16, 2024, Consent Agenda.

Please contact District Director Kelly, District Director Korpak, or me if you have additional questions.

**From:** John Gibbs <jgibbs@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 6, 2023 5:13 PM  
**To:** Kelly, James  
**Subject:** RE: Checking in

Great, look forward to connecting then!

**John Gibbs | County Administrator**  
12220 Fillmore Street | West Olive, Michigan 49460 | 616-738-4642



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**From:** Kelly, James [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 6, 2023 5:12 PM  
**To:** John Gibbs <jgibbs@miottawa.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Checking in

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Absolutely... you can reach me at [REDACTED]

Regards,  
James

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**From:** John Gibbs <jgibbs@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 6, 2023 5:10:30 PM  
**To:** Kelly, James [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Checking in

Hi James,

Are you free for a phone call tomorrow morning (Thu. 12/7) at 8:30 AM?

Thanks,

**John Gibbs | County Administrator**

12220 Fillmore Street | West Olive, Michigan 49460 | 616-738-4642



Ottawa County  
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**From:** Korpak, Michael <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 5, 2024 2:12 PM  
**To:** Joe Moss  
**Cc:** Kelly, James  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

Room 345 is reserved.

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**From:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 5, 2024 2:00:55 PM  
**To:** Korpak, Michael <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Kelly, James <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

Sure, sounds good!

Joe Moss  
Chairperson  
Ottawa County Commissioner  
District 5  
P: [REDACTED]

---

**From:** Korpak, Michael <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 5, 2024 1:50:57 PM  
**To:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Cc:** James Kelly <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

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Thanks for letting us know. No worries.

Would you like us to reserve a room?

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**From:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 5, 2024 1:48 PM  
**To:** Korpak, Michael <[REDACTED]>  
**Cc:** Kelly, James <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

My ETA is 2:15 pm.

Thanks,

Joe Moss  
Chairperson  
Ottawa County Commissioner  
District 5

P: [REDACTED]

---

**From:** Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 5, 2024 9:11:46 AM  
**To:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Cc:** James Kelly [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

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Thank you, Chairman Moss, for making time for James and me today. We will plan on 2:00 pm. If we don't hear from you before 2:00 pm, we will ask at the front desk where we are meeting. We would be happy to include Administrator Gibbs (and others), but that is obviously your decision.

Thank you,  
Scott

PS - Please feel free to connect via my cell phone if anything comes up - [REDACTED]

---

**From:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, January 5, 2024 8:41 AM  
**To:** Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

Hi Scott,

I have meetings at 9am, 11am, 1pm, and 4pm today.

I could meet briefly at the county building a little after 2pm. Does that work?

Thanks,

Joe Moss  
Chairperson  
Ottawa County Commissioner  
District 5

P: [REDACTED]

**From:** Korpak, Michael <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 4, 2024 2:02 PM  
**To:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

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Hi Chairman Moss,

I know it is short notice, but James and I can meet tomorrow (Friday, January 5). Best for us would be in the morning, but I can make some changes so that early afternoon is also an option.

If tomorrow does not work, we are also available the following days / times:

- Tuesday, January 9, after 10:00 a.m.
- Thursday, January 18, preferably afternoon.
- Friday, January 19

Thank you.

M. Scott Korpak, Ed.D.  
Michigan State University Extension  
District Director (Allegan, Barry, Kent & Ottawa)  
C: [REDACTED] | O: 616-632-7887

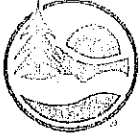
**From:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 3, 2024 10:27 AM  
**To:** Korpak, Michael <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting Follow Up

Hi Scott,

Thanks for looking into those details. I hope you had a very Merry Christmas and a great New Year's celebration! Let's connect again soon after you've had some time to connect with the main office, etc. I know things get a little extra busy around the holidays. I'm catching back up today as well.

Thanks,

**Joe Moss | Chairperson**



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**From:** Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 29, 2023 4:45 PM  
**To:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

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Hello Chairman Moss,

All of Michigan State University is closed this week. Offices reopen on January 3. Even so, I did as thorough of a search as I could to see if I could find any contracts between MSU Extension and any other organization in Ottawa County besides the Memorandum of Agreement with the county.

I was unable to find a contract with Ottawa County Community Health. I spent additional time looking for anything related to the Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) in Ottawa County.

While I am new, I was not surprised to find any contracts because of how MSU Extension works in each county as described in the MOA.

As soon as I am able, I will ask on January 3 if there is a contract between MSU Extension and the Ottawa County Community Health / CCBHC services and will let you know as soon as possible.

As you requested. I did watch the video.

[REDACTED]  
I will be back online on Wednesday.

Lastly, are there dates that you would like to recommend when we meet next? If so, please share with me.

Thanks,  
Scott

**From:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 28, 2023 10:28 AM  
**To:** Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting Follow Up

Hi Scott,

Thank you for your response. I had a wonderful Christmas as well!

I have two quick requests. Could you please confirm by tomorrow?



1. Will you please check if MSU Extension is or was contracted with Ottawa County Community Mental Health for their CCBHC program? I would like to see the contract(s).
2. Will you please review this video which includes an MSU Extension employee:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhZ9iLLIQ18>

Thanks,

**Joe Moss | Chairperson**  
12220 Fillmore Street | West Olive, Michigan 49460 [REDACTED] District 5



**Ottawa County**  
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**From:** Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 28, 2023 8:09 AM  
**To:** Joe Moss <[jmoss@miottawa.org](mailto:jmoss@miottawa.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

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Hello Chairman Moss,

Thank you, we did have a very nice Christmas. [REDACTED]

I hope you and your family also had a good Christmas and are looking forward to the new year.

Thank you for your patience and understanding in receiving a response from MSU Extension. I know that Matt Shane, who I report to, has made getting a response to you a priority. I am also learning firsthand that large organizations have several layers and multiple steps to complete in the decision-making process.

Matt said that he would schedule a time to meet with James and I next week. He said he was hopeful that he would have a formal response for us to provide to you, but he also said he could not make any promises. As soon as we are done meeting with Matt, we will report back to you.

In the meantime, please let me know if there is anything else that I can I do to help.

Thanks,  
Scott

**From:** Joe Moss <jmoss@miottawa.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 27, 2023 4:27 PM  
**To:** Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting Follow Up

Hi Scott,

I hope you had a great Christmas.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thanks,

Joe Moss  
Chairperson  
Ottawa County Commissioner  
District 5  
P: [REDACTED]

---

**From:** Joe Moss  
**Sent:** Friday, December 15, 2023 11:11:03 AM  
**To:** Korpak, Michael [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** John Gibbs <jgibbs@miottawa.org>; James Kelly <[REDACTED]>  
**Subject:** Meeting Follow Up

Scott and James,

Thanks for meeting with Allison and me last week. We appreciated learning more about MSU Extension.

When we met, you mentioned wanting to better understand the types of information one of your employees was posting publicly on social media. You stated that your team at MSU Extension are strictly non-political, and do not use their position of authority for personal or political reasons (in the community; working for MSU Extension; seen as leaders in Ottawa County government; often representing Ottawa County in local schools and organizations).

Please allow me to add some thoughts/commentary regarding the lies in the post I attached below.

**"Children in district 2 are going to go hungry bc Ottawa Food will be eliminated."**

1. False and inflammatory. The board was abundantly clear, the Ottawa Food program should continue, and be a priority.
2. Regarding the budget, the health department budget passed this year was the second highest budget of the past 15+ years.
3. This statement makes me wonder how your employee would know the program "would be eliminated" ahead of time, even when the board demanded it be a priority, and not be stopped.
4. The Senior Project Fresh program they "paused" or "eliminated" was for senior citizens, not children. The gleaning program collects food from farmers.
5. The programs they "paused" were seasonal in nature.
6. There is absolutely no link between the Ottawa Food programs being "paused" and children "going hungry" in Ottawa County.

**"District 2 families that are struggling will lose access to dental care for their children."**

1. County dental programs were not eliminated, nor did they receive less funding.
2. This was never recommended by the board or anyone that I know, and so this statement seems completely baseless and without merit.

**“That new cute independent Northside restaurant you really love might go under bc they can’t afford the inspections.”**

1. False and inflammatory.
2. What a ridiculous, fearmongering statement.

**“All that new housing slated to start on the northside will now cost more bc inspection fees have to be raised exponentially to cover operating costs.”**

1. False and inflammatory.
2. It is interesting that your employee picked another issue that people deeply care about to add to his fearmongering.
3. Cost for inspections were not raised “exponentially” and this was never going to happen. However, even if costs increased, it would not stop developers from building housing developments.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,

**Joe Moss | Chairperson**

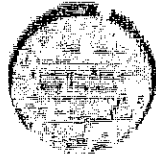
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6d Like Reply



**Chris Kleinjans**

Children in district 2 are going bc Ottawa Food will be eliminated. District 2 families that are struggling to get access to dental care for their children. That new cute independent Ne restaurant you really love might close bc they can't afford the inspection fees. All that new housing slated to be built on the northside will now cost more bc the inspection fees have to be raised exponentially due to increased operating costs.

If this isn't an example of Council working against the interests of the working class, on-the-grind working class district, I don't know what is.

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