

800 Bradbury Dr. SE
Suite 215
Albuquerque, NM 87106
(505) 554 7706
www.sec.nm.gov



Hon. William F. Lang (*Chair*)
Jeffrey L. Baker
Stuart M. Bluestone
Hon. Celia Castillo
Hon. Dr. Terry McMillan
Ronald Solimon
Dr. Judy Villanueva

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONTACT:

For Immediate Release:

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Jane.Kirkpatrick@sec.nm.gov
Communications Manager
(505) 554 7706

PRESS RELEASE

State Ethics Commission Files Civil Enforcement Action Against Village of Angel Fire Officials and Contractor, Carristo Creative Consulting LLC

Albuquerque, NM, June 24, 2024 – The State Ethics Commission filed [a lawsuit](#) against Village of Angel Fire officials, including the Village of Angel Fire Mayor, and Carristo Creative Consulting LLC, a Village contractor, for violations of the Procurement Code.

Based on informal complaints the Commission received and a subsequent investigation, the Commission has reason to believe that the Village of Angel Fire awarded a \$1 million contract to Carristo Creative, a company with personal and professional ties to the Village’s mayor, without issuing a request for proposals or seeking competitive bids. The contract was for services beyond the scope of the Procurements Code’s exemption for “purchases of advertising,” encompassing branding creation, video and photography deliverables, website upgrades, and social media management. Accordingly, the Commission believes that this contract award violated the Procurement Code and filed an appropriate civil action.

The Procurement Code mandates that public bodies use a competitive sealed process for public contracts exceeding \$60,000 to ensure transparency, maximize the value of public funds, and maintain the integrity of the procurement system. The Village’s failure to comply with these requirements, coupled with the mayor’s

personal and business relationship with Carristo Creative and its principals, raises significant concerns about conflicts of interest and the proper use of public funds.

Jeremy Farris, the Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission, stated: “This case presents an opportunity to clarify the limits of the advertising exemption within the Procurement Code and to enforce compliance with essential procurement practices.”

The Commission’s action is an important step in addressing and deterring conflicts of interest and improper procurement practices in New Mexico.

About the State Ethics Commission

The State Ethics Commission is an independent, constitutional state agency with the authority to enforce civil violations of New Mexico’s governmental ethics and disclosure statutes, including the Procurement Code. The Commission is comprised of three Democratic Commissioners, three Republican Commissioners, and one independent Commissioner who is registered as “decline to state.”

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For more information about the State Ethics Commission, visit www.sec.nm.gov.