



BARBALUNGA FOR SHERIFF

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“Time For Change – Justice That Works”

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BARBALUNGA SAYS SHERIFF CREATED A CULTURE WHERE CAR AND GAS CAR PRIVILEGES REPORTEDLY RESULTED IN A TRIP TO FLORIDA

Berkshire County—Alf Barbalunga, a Democratic candidate for Berkshire County Sheriff, says that while rumors of take-home vehicles and gas cards in the Sheriff’s office are nothing new, the latest story, independently and voluntarily shared by multiple employees unsolicited, shocked even him.



“I was told that an internal audit was done of the Sheriff’s Office vehicles and one was discovered missing,” states Barbalunga. “I was told after some investigating, it was discovered that a family member of one of the employees had it in Florida, and someone had to go down and retrieve it. We have been informed that line staff was never told if

the state paid for this trip, the flight or gas and tolls, or if the employee or their family member paid. It appears to be part of the lack of transparency that continues to be revealed as we proceed with our own investigation of the sheriff’s “black budget” and “car culture” dynasty.

It is common knowledge that the sheriff’s employees, especially high ranked employees are allowed to use state vehicles to travel to and from work. How many and how much money is actually spent is what remains elusive. Alf has been told approximately 14-16 vehicles are commonly used for personal use, with the rationale that people are “on call.”

Gas card expenses for personal use appear to be a percentage of the annual fuel cost. According to Alf’s budget review, the code G05 is for Fuel for Vehicles, and in the 2021 budget, Fuel for Vehicles totaled \$61,003.94. This is a lot compared to the Franklin County Sheriff’s office at \$31,484 and the Hampshire County’s Sheriff’s office at \$24,493.

We are also told that the fuel budget is augmented by a mandatory 10% wage garnishment from employees' detail work, though we cannot trace whether this wage garnishment is used to cover personal use gas card monies.

"At first glance it doesn't make sense," says Barbalunga. "There is prisoner transport around the state, but \$61,000 is a lot of fuel and mileage, and when you consider there are 14-16 vehicles being driven as personal commuter cars, then it all starts to add up. Take the Assistant Superintendent I who made over \$180,000 last year; he lives outside of Berkshire County, in South Hadley, MA. That's a 100-mile round-trip, 5 days a week, 50 weeks a year - that's 25,000 miles if he's driving to work that often. Let's say he's getting 25mpg for a state vehicle, that's 1000 gallons. At \$4 per gallon, that's \$4000 right there. I was also told he had kayak racks on his state vehicle for a while, which means he was apparently using it for personal use to go kayaking."

In 2021, [the Berkshire Eagle reported](#) that Andrea Harrington drove a vehicle leased by the state, and it was apparently controversial. Barbalunga compares this criticism to the Sheriff's Office: "This isn't just the sheriff's vehicle being driven, which I would understand, but he has a large number of staff with vehicles too, including a plow truck, we've been told, being driven in the summer using a state gas card, with the excuse that the driver was 'on call'! I think that's taking it too far."

Barbalunga reports he will not allow this behavior if he is elected and will cut back on take home cars and gas card privileges. "People making over \$100,000 can afford to drive their own car to work. I do."



If elected, he is also considering selling the sheriff's Hummer that the sheriff restored, (which appears to be maintained only for parade and car shows) and the motorcycle fleet, and use that money for additional renovations of



the future women's pod(s).

"We aren't SWAT and we aren't CHIPS", says Barbalunga, "The Sheriff's Office doesn't need these types of vehicles. They are just expensive toys. Any money we can save by getting rid of toys, we can put into programming and the men and women who work hard to rehabilitate the prisoners."

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