BARBALUNGA FOR SHERIFF

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"Time For Change – Justice That Works"

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BARBALUNGA SAYS THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE'S ARTICLE ON SPECIAL SHERIFF CONTAINS MORE FUZZY MATH AND MISSED ISSUES

Berkshire County—Alf Barbalunga, a Democratic candidate for Berkshire County Sheriff, says that while he respects the Berkshire Eagle for reporting on the payment of more than $70,000 in grant money to the Special Sheriff between February 2021 and June 2022, the numbers reported don't add up. In addition, the Eagle also failed to report that the Medically Tailored Meals program is "budget limited."
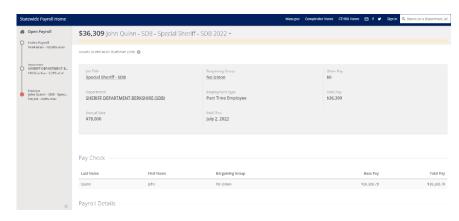
"I can't remember what my math grades were at PHS, but I don't need to remember calculus to know these numbers don't multiply, divide or add up," says Barbalunga.   "I would like a clarification from the Eagle and/or the sheriff, please."

The Berkshire Eagle states:

The Special Sheriff earned $36,309 in 2022 (final paycheck 7/2/22).

The Special Sheriff worked an average of 20 hours per week.

The Special Sheriff earned $35 per hour.

$35 per hour x 20hrs/week = $700 per week over 6 months (26 weeks) = $18,200

That means that the Special Sheriff should have only earned $18,200, not $36,309.

Let's do the math another way…

The Special Sheriff's last paycheck according to www.cthrupayroll.gov was July 2, 2022. So, from January 1, 2022 – July 2, 2022, the Special Sheriff earned approximately $36,000 over 6 months working 20 hours per week.

That is $36,000/6 months = $6000 per month @ 2 pay periods per month, the payment method followed by the Sheriff's office, which works out to $1500 per week for a part-time 20/hour work week.

$1500 per week / 20 hours per week = $75 hour (**NOT** $35 per hour as reported)

In order for the Special Sheriff to earn $36,309 @ $35/hour it takes 1037.4 hours

Divide 1037.4 hours by 6 months and you get 172.9 hours per month

Divide 172.9 hours by 4 weeks and you get 43.225 hours per week

Once again, the math doesn't add up. The Special Sheriff didn't work full-time. The sheriff reported he worked 20 hours per week. And, at $35 per hour, the Special Sheriff would have had to have worked more than full time to earn $36,309 in six months.

"We are all human; we all make mistakes," says Barbalunga. "But this is an election for a 6-year term to handle a $20+ million budget. Money matters; the public needs to know who can count and who can't. This is basic math. I believe the Special Sheriff was paid $75 per hour, not $35 per hour," says Barbalunga.

"This is not a slight on the Special Sheriff. I'm sure he did a great job, but $36,000 over 6 months part-time to help run a community project, especially a "budget limited" non-profit meals program for people with health issues, is an excessive salary for the sheriff to pay anyone, regardless of their skills.

A "budget limited" program is one that turns away qualified people if funding isn't available in the program. "That means people with diabetes or other health problems who needed the meals won't get them because of limited funding," explains Barbalunga. "That means every dollar saved means more towards a meal served to a person in need."

"How many more people could have been served if the sheriff had asked his current superintendent or another salaried employee or someone in the community to facilitate the program at $35 per hour for 20 hours per week?"

Note: According to the Berkshire Eagle, and other media sources, the Medically Tailored Meals Program served 2500 meals from July 2021 – July 2022 and 1250 grocery totes (at a cost of $40-$45 per tote). According to estimates, that works out to about $75,000 or less in food, plus overhead for the program, much of which was free labor by inmates. The Second Street Second Chances grant was received by BCC in late February of 2022. It is unknown when that grant reimbursed the jail.

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