

Yates Gets Reply--Not an Answer

Written by Steve Frank
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Watauga Republican Party Chair Anne-Marie Yates got an reply, not action in her request for information about political activity of ASU employees of the university on the job or using state facilities. In a letter to UNC Board of Governors Chairman Peter Hans, Watauga Watauga Republican Party Chair Anne-Marie Yates got an answer about her request for information about ASU employees and their permission to conduct political activities, but maybe not the answer to her questions. Yates request is for emails from ASU employee Stella Anderson "which were sent and/or received on the state email system and which are public records according to the law," according to her email to Peter Hans, chair of the UNC Board of Governors.

That response from Hans came late Friday afternoon, with Hans saying, "I've been made aware of these matters through our mutual friend, Nathan Miller (the chair of the Watauga County Board of Commissioners)." In that, he said, "The UNC system's general counsel, Tom Shanahan, is working with the campus legal staff to ensure that all public records requests are processed in a timely and efficient manner. My understanding is that the size of this request has delayed the response." Hans went on to conclude by saying, "Please know that our board expects each campus to comply with the law and also follow the system's policy on political activity. In fact, the board is in the process of strengthening that policy to establish brighter lines on this subject."

Yates says in the communication that, "Unfortunately, our experiences with officials at Appalachian State University seems to indicate a desire to withhold information and to delay or stonewall the release of information to which we are entitled." She also cited prior experiences with ASU "not following UNC procedures." She cited "the case of Rennie Brantz's failure to obtain required approval from ASU administration prior to running for office," saying "we were informed that the regulations (for some reason) did not apply to Mr Brantz. Following Brantz's election however, we read in the local newspaper that Mr Brantz was retroactively allowed to file the paperwork in question and that no other action was taken."