

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE BOARD**

**PRIMA FACIE
DETERMINATION**

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPLAINT OF DONNA BERGSTROM REGARDING BARBARA CROW

On January 22, 2024, the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board received a complaint submitted by Donna Bergstrom regarding Barbara Crow, who is the chair of the St. Louis County (03) DFL. The St. Louis County (03) DFL (20704) is a political party unit registered with the Board.

The complaint alleges that Ms. Crow provided a falsified name, mailing address, email address, and phone number, when registering to attend a fundraiser by the 3B House District RPM. The 3B House District RPM (20805) is also a political party unit registered with the Board. The complaint alleges that Ms. Crow registered for the event online by paying \$100 with the name “Susan Johnson” using the address of the Cook County DFL’s post office box and an incorrect email address and phone number. The complaint alleges that Ms. Crow attended the event, introduced herself as “Susan Johnson,” and wore a name tag with the name “Susan Johnson” at the event. The complaint alleges that Ms. Crow’s actions violated Minnesota Statutes section 10A.15.

Determination

Minnesota Statutes section 10A.15, subdivision 2 provides that “[a]n individual who receives a contribution in excess of \$20 for a . . . party unit must, on demand of the treasurer, inform the treasurer of the name and, if know, the address of the source of the contribution, the amount of the contribution, and the date it was received.” The complaint asserts that Ms. Crow, as chair of a party unit, was aware of the requirement to provide her legal name and address with the contribution, and alleges that her actions were unethical and deceptive. While Minnesota Statutes section 10A.15 requires the treasurer to obtain the name and address of the contributor, here, the complaint lists the correct name and address for Ms. Crow, and therefore, the party unit has the correct information for its report. The complaint therefore does not state a prima facie violation of Minnesota Statutes section 10A.15.

Minnesota Statutes section 10A.29 states that “[a]n individual or association that attempts to circumvent this chapter by redirecting a contribution through, or making a contribution on behalf of, another individual or association is guilty of a gross misdemeanor and subject to a civil penalty imposed by the board of up to \$3,000.” The complaint alleges that Ms. Crow provided the name of another person and provided an incorrect address when she registered for the event. While the complaint does not cite Minnesota Statutes section 10.29, the complaint states that Ms. Crow attempted to avoid the disclosure requirements of Chapter 10A by providing the name of another person and an inaccurate address in making a \$100 contribution by credit card

and registering for the event. The complaint therefore states a prima facie violation of Minnesota Statutes section 10A.29.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 10A.022, subdivision 3, this prima facie determination is made by a single Board member and not by any vote of the entire Board. This prima facie determination does not mean that the Board has commenced, or will commence, an investigation or has made any determination of a violation by any of the individuals or entities named in the complaint.

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 10A.022, subdivision 3 (d), within 60 days of the date of this determination, the Board will make findings and conclusions as to whether probable cause exists to believe that a violation of Minnesota Statutes section 10A.29 has occurred and warrants a formal investigation. The complainant and the respondent named in this prima facie determination will be given an opportunity to be heard by the Board prior to any decision on probable cause.

Until the Board makes a public finding or enters into a conciliation agreement, this matter is subject to the confidentiality requirements of Minnesota Statutes section 10A.022, subdivision 5.



David Asp, Chair
Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board

Date: February 5, 2024