

Freeholders, Commissioners and Concerned Community Members:

Somerset County Library Management may say no one will lose their jobs in the reorganization, but that is not the fear that was expressed in Senff's letter. Employees with experience, skill, and respect in the profession and commitment to the community have been demoted or terminated or pushed to retire when critical of Auger's direction. Employees who keep their mouths shut may have a place in the Somerset County Library System, but Auger is using the reorganization to circumvent the disciplinary process in order to demote and/or punish those employees who have questioned the appropriateness of his initiatives and the benefit those initiatives have to Somerset County residents. He *must* circumvent the disciplinary process because these employees have years of experience, close ties to the communities and glowing personnel records. Somerset County taxpayers may not care about the toxic work environment that Auger has created where five years ago there existed harmony, growth and innovation. On the other hand, taxpayers may care to know about how library resources are being squandered in the name of Auger's personal self aggrandizement:

- Employees plead for functional phone systems, or the ability to offer the most basic services to library users, for example, color printing or document scanning from public computers (shockingly not available at most branches). However, Auger can't present at ALA or publish articles about basic library systems and gild his own resume. So patrons go without basic services, while Auger invests taxpayer money in things like Google Glass, a \$1500 piece of vanity technology which has no public library application and was obsolete within a year of purchase. The only use of Google Glass was by Auger, when he boasted to colleagues around the country that he had the device.
- Unlike the dedicated employees who advocate for the libraries that serve the communities that they live in, Auger does not live in the state of New Jersey. He has skirted residency requirements by renting a room in a house (not an apartment—a room) and he travels home to Maryland every weekend to do his laundry and spend time with his wife and children. That is his primary residence. A nice big house in Maryland.
- Employees are routinely mired in nonsensical exercises such as a "customer service taskforce" and a "programming charrette" which serve no purpose other than to provide consulting jobs to Auger's cronies who drive up from Maryland. These "consultants" perform limited, pointless work and accept tax payers checks. Auger has engaged 5 consultant projects in his 5 years and **all** have been cronies from Maryland. In fact, one individual, Lew Belfont has accepted 4 of those consulting jobs. Auger will say Belfont is the only person who would accept the job at such a low fee. However, it is clear to most that jobs are split up and advertised with descriptions that far exceed the work actually expected so that only Belfont is aware that the jobs are personal gifts.
- Auger and a colleague take annual trips to Las Vegas to attend the Consumer Electronics Show on the taxpayers dime. Auger will say this is because he is a "visionary" and needs to keep abreast of trends. This year he returned with robots, despite the fact he had just released news of major programming cuts (and programs are more basic library services that benefit Somerset County residents, but not Auger's personal vanity.) One is left to wonder where public color printing fits into Auger's self image as a technological visionary. He probably does not mention that conspicuously lacking service at conferences and in interviews anymore than he mentions the library website which, after 5 years, is still an embarrassment and frequent source of complaints despite Auger's "technological vision."

- Auger has gutted public desk staff and branch services in order to fund a ballooning administration including a three full time person Marketing department whose function is to create a polished image for the services that have now been greatly reduced. For Auger's career and image, having a glossy appearance of services is much more important than actually having those services. Surprise, surprise: the taxpayers and public desk staff who help the taxpayers preferred the actual services.
- Auger's reorganization also added 3 regional area managers for central, southern and northern Somerset County who report to another assistant director who then report to Auger. In a **10 branch library** system. This is absurd. The restructuring is a model of waste and bureaucracy designed to reduce Auger's own work responsibilities and insulate him from the type of controversies and gaffes that have put him in the newspapers since taking over five years ago.
- Auger will speak loftily about the Somerset County System having been 25 years out of date, but is unable to elaborate on these canned explanations. Anyone who has worked in the private or public sector knows that massive bureaucracies were a product of the 1960s. Libraries that feature lean administrations with maximum resources reaching users are the future. Ocean County Library System, which Auger drew comparisons to, has 21 branches.
- Auger depends on a Commission that has fallen asleep at the wheel to rubber stamp his initiatives. Commission members are quoted on mycentraljersey as saying they "vetted the reorganization". Yet they privately admit to employees and advisory board members that Auger gave them only the broadest outlines of the reorganization and say that it isn't their job to question Auger's management. This is disturbing given that Auger is a public employee and it is the Commission's charge to do just that.
- The Commission frequently goes into closed session with Auger, when it is not appropriate to do so, giving Auger wide latitude to present misleading data to support his goals and mischaracterize the success of his initiatives, unchallenged by patrons or those who work with him. The Director's report is not even presented at Commission meetings where it would be subject to Sunshine Law and OPMA, but is simply referenced as "having been sent".

The staff of the library system have been terrified into keeping quiet for fear of termination or bullying disciplinary action. The truth is that they have no confidence in Auger's leadership or respect for him as a professional. The Freeholders and Commissioners would be remiss in their duties and responsibilities if they allowed the organization to continue to implode under Auger's mismanagement. These problems cannot be resolved by greater communication. These problems can only be resolved by the termination of Brian Auger's employment at SCLS. It is time for new leadership and an opportunity to rebuild what was once a great library system.

-Some Concerned Staff of the Somerset County Library System