



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
OFFICE OF CAMPAIGN & POLITICAL FINANCE

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May 11, 2020

Cecily Graham  
The Graham Committee  
1165 Hyde Park Avenue  
Hyde Park, MA 02136

Re: CPF-20-11

Dear Ms. Graham:

This office has completed its review of your campaign finance activity during 2019 and 2020. As a result of this review, we have concluded that your Committee did not comply with M.G.L. c. 55, the Massachusetts campaign finance law.

In November 2019, you were an unsuccessful candidate for City Council in Boston. Subsequently, in March 2020, you stated that you were elected to the Ward 18 Boston Democratic City Committee. In January 2020, you called OCPF regarding expenditures by your Committee for repairs and campaign use of your personal automobile.

You stated that you used your personal car for campaign purposes and that you also needed the car to run for Ward Committee. You stated that as a result of the constant use of the car, repairs were required and you thought it was permissible to use campaign funds for that purpose. The Committee spent nearly \$500 at two vendors, A-1 Automatic and AutoZone, to repair your personal vehicle.

M.G.L. c. 55, § 6 permits political committees to “expend money or other things of value for the enhancement of the political future of the candidate...provided, however, that the expenditure shall not be primarily for the candidate’s or any other person’s personal use.” OCPF has issued a Memorandum, M-97-03, to provide guidance regarding reimbursement for campaign use of a personal vehicle. The Memorandum states that a political committee may reimburse a candidate or other person, who is not otherwise reimbursed, for campaign travel in an amount up to and including the standard mileage rate set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Reimbursement is made at the IRS rate based on miles traveled. Committees should not make direct payments for items that are included in the

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mileage reimbursement rate, such as fuel. OCPF closely scrutinizes expenditures to ensure that campaign funds are not used to pay for personal travel.

You acknowledged that Committee funds were used to make direct payments to the vendors for the repairs to your personal automobile; that such payments were not based on any assessment of the miles traveled for campaign purposes; and that records were not maintained regarding such travel. Therefore, the use of Committee funds to pay these automobile expenses did not comply with Section 6 or M-97-03.

As of the date of this letter, you have reimbursed \$400 to the Committee for its expenditures made to repair your car. To completely resolve this matter, you have agreed to reimburse your Committee the remaining balance of \$100 of the \$500 in total that was spent by the Committee to repair your car. Because you have taken this remedial action, and because we believe that the guidance provided as a result of this review will ensure future compliance with the campaign finance law, this matter may be closed at this time. You and the Committee should take care in the future, however, to ensure that Committee funds are not used for personal expenses, for either you or any other person.

In accordance with the opinion of the Supervisor of Public Records, this letter is a matter of public record.

Sincerely,

  
Sarah A. Hartry  
Deputy General Counsel