

## Black Diamond Residents Paying a Price for Council's Political Obstruction

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**T**he chaos in the city of Black Diamond brought on by three councilmembers is a prime example of how not to run local government. The three councilmembers' impediment of city business is having a harmful effect on the residents of the community.

Voters elect their public officials to facilitate the work of local government. In Black Diamond, the majority of the council is doing just the opposite.

At every step of the way, it appears that the council is trying to disrupt, derail, and delay the work of the city.

The impact has been disastrous. The city's bills have gone unpaid, building inspections have been placed on hold, and the advice of the city attorney and city insurers has been ignored.

The council is ostensibly trying to thwart a previously approved development project. But city residents are paying the price for the council's abdication of responsibility and interference with the provision of essential services.

When the council refuses to approve gas for police vehicles and 911 emergency services, it is recklessly using public safety as a political tool to further its own agenda.

The council's antics have led to the loss of grant money to update the city's stormwater capacity and to make required improvements to the city's street lights. Taxpayers will have to make up the difference or forego the important enhancements.

The city went for three months without a building inspector. If residents wanted to move forward with building a deck or repairing an existing structure, they had to wait. By refusing to hire an inspector, the council impeded an important construction project at a local elementary school.

The council's shenanigans are getting the city into legal trouble. By failing to show up to council meetings and trying to circumvent the state's open meeting laws, councilmembers are putting the city at risk of a costly lawsuit. If that happens, the public will once again have to pick up the tab.

The city's hardworking staff is bearing the brunt of the chaos. They have been unjustly harangued by councilmembers in the press and compelled to attend meetings beyond their normal working hours.

The staff at the city are experienced professionals. They know their role is not to take a position on the development controversy; they are simply trying to conduct the business of the city to benefit the residents of the community. They want to see to it that the city's bills get paid on time, that schools and street lights are improved, and that the city is fulfilling its legal and financial obligations.

In short, they are just trying to do their jobs. It is now incumbent on the council to stop interfering with their work so that they can go about the business of serving the residents of the local community.