

## Paul Rolly: Uintah school lunch probe gets fishier and fishier

BY PAUL ROLLY

THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

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As Alice once said about Wonderland, the case of the Uintah School lunch manager and the trashing of children's lunches in January is getting "curiouser and curiouser."

Amid suspicions by some parents that a recent report blaming then-Uintah nutrition manager Shirley Canham was a whitewash absolving Salt Lake City School District officials, one school board member has been pressing for answers.

Now, he says, district brass are investigating him.

Michael Clara, who represents the west side, says he became concerned the district was making the lunch manager a scapegoat when he learned she had been interviewed by two city police officers.

He discovered that the officers, who came to Uintah in April and asked Canham to meet them at police headquarters for an interview, have relationships with the district. One provides security for the district at various events; the other is a high school resource officer in the district.

Rumors were emanating from district personnel that Canham may be charged with a crime.

An investigation by the Salt Lake City law firm of Thompson, Ostler & Olsen put the blame largely on Canham for throwing away the lunches of children whose parents were behind on their meal payments.

But several parents and Clara question the report's objectivity, especially how it downplayed that tossing out lunches for nonpayment was district policy.

When a parent confronted district officials at a Sept. 2 school board meeting about

police being called to question Canham, the officials acted as if they didn't know about it.

But police spokesman Dennis McGowan confirmed that the officers questioned Canham at the district's request, asking them to investigate possible fraudulent activity.

Police sent the case to the Salt Lake County district attorney's office for screening. But D.A. Sim Gill said his office declined to file charges.

The case now is closed.

Clara, in his inquiries to the police department, wanted to know why two officers who have ties to the district were the ones who questioned Canham.

The law firm's report emphasized allegations that Canham had lied to the district supervisor by telling her she routinely threw away lunches as per district policy. It ignored that Canham previously had not dumped the lunches because she didn't have the heart to deprive the kids of their meals. But she feared she would get in trouble with the district if it was known she was violating that policy.

The report also noted that Canham had transferred money from one account to another. But Gill said his office determined she didn't do that for any personal gain, just to help one of the kids whose account was short. Gill said neither set of parents objected to that.

Clara has filed an open-records request for the police report. And the school district has submitted one to the city for all communications Clara has had with city officials.

Clara, in turn, has filed a request with the district asking why it submitted a records request on him.

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Board Business Meeting

10/07/2014

3. Ashley Hoopes addressed the board on the misallocation of \$8,000 in lunch funds at Uintah Elementary School. She said she felt it was a small percentage over a five year period, and as a parent she was willing to accept the discrepancy in order for students to be fed. She said as a volunteer, she felt the lunchroom was understaffed, and the lunch manager should not have been in charge of receiving money.

The board discussed a situation regarding a request to speak which had not been included on the 'Request to Speak List' given to board members. President Swett addressed the parent who made the request, and asked if she would speak with Ken Grover, who is in charge of High School Support, about her concerns. The parent was then invited to address the board.

<sup>NA</sup>(4) A motion was made to follow the written Agenda given to the board, which did not include the additional Request to Speak. No action was taken on the motion.

<sup>\*\*</sup>(Nelson and Young)

4. Christina Barbosa spoke to the board regarding the environment at West High School. She is concerned students are not receiving the help they need when being bullied, and felt her earlier concerns had not been addressed. Ms. Barbosa agreed to meet with Ken Grover, Director Career & Technology and High School Support, to discuss her concerns.

C. REPORTS:

1. Highlights from School Improvement Plans.
  - a. Nibley Park Elementary School. Principal Frances Battle introduced Misty Vrieze, PTSA President, Aimee Horman, SCC Chairman, Linda Roundy, Media Teacher, and Betty Moffat, School Counselor. She thanked the board for the opportunity to discuss Nibley Park Elementary. She said this is her first year at the school, but she has had the opportunity to interact with community members and is impressed by their support. She highlighted the unique nature of Nibley Park as a K-8 school, and said the staff has the opportunity to start children in their education and see them through to high school. She talked about the focus on students who are struggling, efforts to improve writing instruction, and the Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) program. She also highlighted the effectiveness of coaching, having teachers work together in Professional Learning Communities (PLC), and she discussed the information on the Nibley Park School Highlight Report. She said some goals for next year are having all full-day kindergarten classes, starting Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and Extended Learning Program (ELP) programs, and differentiating more between elementary school and middle school students.

Ms. Battle answered questions from board members regarding the age differences of students and success of students as they go from Nibley Park to high school. President Swett thanked the group for the presentation. A copy of the handout has been added to the official minutes.
2. Child Nutrition Recommendations. Steve Woods, Director, Auxiliary Services, and Kelly Orton, Director, Child Nutrition, thanked the board for the opportunity to update them on the Child Nutrition Department. Mr. Orton presented information about Policy G-6: Child Nutrition Food Service Management, and recommended a few modifications to the Administrative Procedures of the policy. He discussed improvements in parent notifications, changes to accounting procedures, and the Horizons Lunchroom System. He also outlined professional development plans, improved internal and external communication options, and ways to support the school community.



## Britta Barney

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**From:** Jason Olsen  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 19, 2014 11:34 AM  
**To:** McKell Withers; Janet Roberts  
**Cc:** Michael Williams; Kristina Kindl  
**Subject:** Last night's meeting

I commend you for not getting into a public argument with Mr. Clara last night. His repugnant allegations and attitude made it clear that he wanted an argument.

It seems clear to me that Mr. Clara has violated the Board Ethics policy, and he has, on multiple occasions, violated the policy regarding placing items on the board agenda. I believe he can and should be censured for his actions. We know he will react in a defiant manner and claim he is the victim, but we can't control that. We can control how we respond.

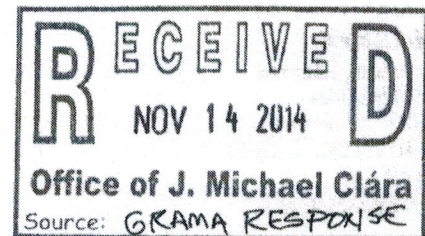
It is clear Mr. Clara will continue to act in this manner because he feels he can get away with it. It would be my recommendation that the board leadership or other board members do something, in a public manner, to reprimand Mr. Clara. Many national articles on dealing with rogue board members agree the actions need to be taken by fellow board members. They are his peers and it is their role to try to temper his actions. Here are some of the options the national articles suggest.

- Letter of reprimand
- Censure
- Change board meeting procedures and agendas to limit speaking time
- Declaring any discussion not on the agenda out of order and stopping it immediately
- Motion to remove board member from meeting
- Public letter asking/demanding for public apology
- Letter of support from the board for superintendent and board administrator
- Letters of support from the schools
- Letters of support from the community

If you need any help from me, please let me know.

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*Jason R. Olsen*

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## S.L. Mayor Becker seeks input on use-of-force issues

Published: Monday, Jan. 26 2015 3:05 p.m. MST



Mayor Ralph Becker is shown in this Jan. 14, 2015 file photo. (Chelsey Alder, Deseret News)

SALT LAKE CITY — Mayor Ralph Becker is convening a series of public meetings to facilitate community discussion regarding officer-involved shootings and police use-of-force issues.

“We recognize that there is concern in our community about the use of force and are developing a dialogue series to convene policymakers and interested community members for meaningful discussions of the issues associated with use of force, and in particular, officer-involved shootings,” the Salt Lake City mayor said. “I’m seeking input from community members to let us know

exactly how these forums should look to ensure we’re working together and effectively.”

Residents are invited to share their thoughts on which topics and issues need to be addressed, who should be a part of the dialogue, and what type of meeting structure will provide the best benefit.

Community members can provide input via the city’s Open City Hall website at [slcgov.com](http://slcgov.com). The feedback posting will be open for comment through Feb. 8, after which ideas will be tabulated and public meetings scheduled.