



Paula Ryan's Mismanagement of Disaster Relief Blue Roof Program Costs West Palm Beach Taxpayers \$1 Million

West Palm Beach city audit found "remarkable array of abuses" and "conflict of interest" in Blue Roof program run by Ryan

WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, February 12, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Paula Ryan, a candidate for West Palm Beach Mayor was cited for conflict of interest and cronyism in mismanagement of the city's Blue Roof program leading to a \$1.2 million fine against the city from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The complete audit of the Blue Roof program can be found [here](#).

As the manager of WPB's Blue Roof program, Paula was in charge of providing roof repair and replacement to low-income WPB residents whose homes were damaged by hurricanes. The Blue Roof program sounded like a simple and straightforward plan as the city had \$1 million of federal money that they needed to spend - or lose. Paula, the city's interim economic and community development director at the time, thought she had the solution: use the money to fix the damaged roofs of needy residents before the next hurricane season.

Instead, Paula cost taxpayers more than \$1 million in fines thanks to her mismanagement and favoritism as outlined in the city's audit of the program. The audit found Paula helped two personal friends get new roofs who were not affected by the hurricane with taxpayer-funded repairs. Paula was also caught giving a no-bid contract for the roof repairs to a friend's company who then overcharged taxpayers by \$350,000.

Paula was cited by a city audit for a "remarkable array of abuses" and self-dealing while managing the city's Blue Roof program. Her mismanagement and conflicts of interest caused the city to be fined \$1.2 million.

Now Paula is running for Mayor of WPB. Many taxpayers are wondering if Paula can be trusted with the city's finances. The Palm Beach Post and WPB City Audit of the Blue Roof program highlight the array of abuses and mismanagement under Paula.

Paula was cited for inappropriate behavior and poor judgement for helping two friends get new, taxpayer-funded roofs on their homes, under a program she ran for the city.

"Staff reported the ECD Director [Paula] became personally involved in asking a staff member, who was not otherwise involved in the Program, to certify and expedite one of these files...We find any effort by the ECD Director to expedite or facilitate the review and approval process for a participant with whom she had a friendship was inappropriate and demonstrated poor judgment." [City of WPB, Internal Auditor's Office, Report No. 2007-004, 9/21/07]

City audit found "remarkable array of abuses" in Blue Roof program run by Paula — including no-bid contract given to the roof company whose president was personal friends with Paula. "City auditors who looked at WPB's Blue Roof Project to repair hurricane-damaged homes wrote a scathing 34-page report that detailed a remarkable array of abuses, missteps and mismanagement. Start with Paula, the former head of the city's Economic and Development

Department. Ms. Ryan came up with the idea of using federal grant money to repair roofs for low-income and elderly homeowners." [PBP, 9/29/07]

The roofing company overcharged WPB taxpayers \$350,000, including billing taxpayers for work that was never done.

Paula Ryan "chose Jupiter-based Seal-Tite Roofing to do the work, without seeking bids...Auditors found numerous problems with Seal-Tite's 107 roofing jobs last year. They say the company overcharged the city by \$350,000, largely through inflated measurements. The auditors said Seal-Tite charged the city for work that wasn't done and also charged it for work that shouldn't have been done." [PBP, 9/29/07]

Paula's mismanagement of the Blue Roof program forced the city to return nearly \$1.2 million in federal grant funds.

"The city's shrinking budget took another hit Friday when the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development ordered WPB to pay back \$1.67 million it received from 1998-2007...City documents show \$1.19 million of the \$1.67 million is owed as a result of the 2006 Blue Roof program, run by Paula Ryan, West Palm Beach's interim housing director at that time and a candidate for mayor this spring...'We didn't play by the rules, and we got fined as a result. Hopefully that will never happen again,' Mayor Jeri Muoio said." [PBP, 6/4/11]

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