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Fox at the hen house

Re: "Senior trio to review [fire] department"

I know nothing about these three men. I do believe however that in order to avoid any cloud of impropriety over any results, the investigation should be conducted by an outside group. I believe it falls into the category of "the fox guarding the hen house."

This voter is getting a little fed up with the ongoing bad press about (Key Largo Fire & Rescue Department) personnel, board and tax increases.

Curt Barlow, Key Largo

The Editor

Free Press

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RE: Fox at the hen house (Curt Barlow, Key Largo)

Perhaps Mr. Barlow should have been reading Steve Gibbs' articles more thoroughly. We, the Key Largo Fire Rescue & EMS Board, did enlist an outside CPA firm to perform an audit of controls for the Key Largo Fire Rescue Department. Based on its findings three well-respected and experienced members of the Department (the Senior Advisory Group) stepped forward and offered their services to examine and provide advice on corrective action for some areas of the Department.

As far as "tax increases" goes, Mr. Barlow should check his last two Real Estate Tax Notices. Please note the line item for our District. We held the millage at the same level for 2010 as the prior year despite an approximate 20% decline in property values. In fact, we began the budgeting process by specifying this value and working through the line items of both departments and the district to arrive at it. Our reason for this "backwards" approach (vs. most other government entities) was our view that the drop in real estate values was a reflection of the local economy in general and not an isolated statistic. If people have less cash to spend, how do they afford the same taxes??

William A. Andersen, CPA, CFP

Chair

Key Largo Fire Rescue & EMS District Commission

William A. Andersen, Registered Representative

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