

## **Summary of 9-26-12 interview of Steve Lehman**

Interview and summary by Thomas M. Patton, Deputy Attorney General

Since November 2004, Steve Lehman has served the State Department of Parks and Recreation as deputy director for acquisition and development. Lehman previously served eight years as a principal program budget analyst with the Department of Finance (DOF), and three years as a principal fiscal and policy analyst at the Legislative Analyst's Office. (Steve Lehman 9-26-12 interview transcript (SLtr), pp. 2-4.)

Lehman stated he first heard about disparities in the Parks Department's financial reports to the DOF and the State Controller's Office (SCO) when Pat Kemp at the Natural Resources Agency mentioned to Lehman that Aaron Robertson had told Kemp about the matter. Lehman states that shortly thereafter he learned from John Hiber at the SCO that the SCO was responding to a public records requests for Parks Department fund balance reports. (SLtr, pp. 5-7.)

Lehman attended both small and large executive committee meetings at Parks on a weekly basis throughout his eight-year tenure. The small committee consists of the director, chief deputy director, and the deputy directors. The large committee includes the small executive committee members plus others such as the State Historic Preservation Officer, the planning division chief, and assistant deputy directors from various divisions. (SLtr, pp. 6-7.)

Lehman noted that the topic of budgets and funds was discussed at such meetings, including the fact that loans had been made of Off-Highway Vehicle funds, but the subject of reserve funds was never mentioned. Lehman stated he found it disheartening to find out additional monies existed, as the Department was going through a park closure plan while evidently several people in the executive committees knew about the additional funds not disclosed to the Department of Finance. (SLtr, pp. 7-8.)

Lehman stated he has not communicated with former director Coleman since the story became public, and he has also not spoken with former chief deputy Michael Harris. Lehman indicated he feels embarrassed at how out of the loop he was. (SLtr, pp. 8-9.)