

Mayor Coogan and Administrator Aitken:

I am writing as both a journalist and government transparency activist that has spent a significant amount of time learning and collecting information about local government in Fall River and Bristol County. The City of Fall River has a history and reputation for corrupt, incompetent, and unprofessional governance. It is clear that the inept decision-making and illegal actions of your administration violating civil rights, denying access to public records, and otherwise obstructing government transparency, continues to add to and further enhance the negative public perception about the City of Fall River government. The low voter turnout for municipal elections speaks volumes about the public's disgust with local government.

I am writing today to demand that the City of Fall River and Mayor Paul Coogan immediately cease and desist from blocking my "Will Katz" Facebook profile from being able to view, comment on, and interact with the Official Mayor Paul Coogan and City of Fall River Facebook pages. On November 27, 2023, I realized that Mayor Paul Coogan's Official Facebook page had deleted my comments and blocked the "Will Katz" Facebook profile from being able to view, comment, and interact with the Mayor's official Facebook page. I then posted comments protesting the illegal blocking on three different City of Fall River posts on the Official City of Fall River Facebook page made on November 27, 2023 and tagged local media. I was then immediately blocked by the Official City of Fall River Facebook Page.

Both the Official Mayor Paul Coogan and City of Fall River Facebook pages identify themselves as "official" pages and allow members of the public and the media to interact with local government. The City of Fall River Media Relations webpage expressly lists FRG-TV and the Official City of Fall River Facebook Page as community resources available for the media. Both of the official Facebook pages are maintained and used to provide information on local government and official actions, as well as provide a two-way interactive basis with the media and members of the public. Neither of the Facebook pages has published and posted any social media rules, community standards, or other types of rules or regulations used by either the Mayor or the City of Fall River when monitoring or administering the Facebook pages. At the time my profile was blocked and my comments were deleted, both of the Facebook pages were open and available to the public without any restriction on the form or content of the comments, and without any guidelines for the commenters to follow.

Over approximately the last month, I have asked some questions and posted some opinions on both the official Mayor Paul Coogan's and City of Fall River Facebook pages. None of my questions have been answered by either Mayor Coogan or the City of Fall River in any way whatsoever. It should also be noted that I have never received any response, instruction, or demand from Mayor Coogan or the City of Fall River regarding my usage of the two official Facebook pages for my journalism or government transparency activism. The first time I was ever "notified" about any dispute was on November 27, 2023 when my access to both official Facebook pages was abruptly blocked and my comments apparently deleted. Now I cannot view, interact with, or comment on Facebook posts by either Mayor Coogan or the City of Fall River.

It appears that my comments, questions, and opinions related to Mayor Paul Coogan

and Corporation Counsel Alan Rumsey's decisions to obstruct and withhold production of public records of the DCM investigation for 16 months that could result in court order requiring the City to pay \$137,000 of the Herald's legal fees, prompted the official action and decision to block me from viewing, interacting, and commenting on both Facebook pages. It's illegal for the City of Fall River and Mayor Coogan to retaliate against my constitutionally protected activity by deleting my comments and imposing an on-going block of my "Will Katz" FB profile preventing me from viewing, commenting, and interacting with the official Facebook pages for the City and Mayor. If the Facebook block is not immediately removed, I intend to commence litigation to protect and vindicate my constitutional rights by pursuing legal action using remedies afforded by 42 USC 1983 to include declaratory and injunctive relief as well as monetary damages.

William Katz
Journalist and Government Transparency Activist
Sent from my iPhone