

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Stephanie C.

**Date Submitted:** 03/24/2025 08:47 AM

**Council File No:** 25-0006-S48

**Comments for Public Posting:** It was brought to my attention that Mayor Bass hired Hagerty Consulting for the wildfire recovery. This company has been sued and accused of many horrible things and is a huge concern, especially due to the already strained budget situation with the City. Mark O'Mara, a disaster relief consultant for Haggerty Consulting, plead guilty to fraud, conspiracy and destruction of evidence in a scheme that siphoned federal funds from New York's Hurricane Sandy recovery program. O'Mara, who worked for the Illinois-based disaster recovery firm, fraudulently obtained more than \$250,000 by submitting falsified lease agreements and expense claims for lodging reimbursements. When the city raised concerns about improper travel reimbursements in 2020, O'Mara deleted emails and other evidence to conceal the fraud. As part of his plea deal, he agreed to forfeit \$258,900 and pay \$224,687 in restitution to the New York City Office of Management and Budget. In a related case, Walter Melnick, a retired New York City Police Department inspector and fellow consultant for the same firm, pleaded guilty to federal fraud charges. Melnick admitted to using fraudulent documents to obtain nearly \$400,000 in federal disaster reimbursements. He later agreed to pay restitution and forfeiture totaling \$387,749. With so much on the line, why would Bass take a chance with this firm? This is just another example of poor choices.