

Caldwell's group to disclose its donors - Hawaii News - Honolulu

Star-Advertiser

StarAdvertiser.com

Caldwell's group to disclose its donors

By Gordon Y.K. Pang

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Feb 06, 2013

LAST UPDATED: 06:26 p.m. HST, Feb 06, 2013



[Ads by Google](#)

[500 Business Cards \\$7.95](#) 500 high-quality cards just \$7.95. Satisfaction guarantee. 24hr ship.

www.123print.com/500_BizCardsUnder8

[Newspaper Archives Online](#) Thousands of historical newspapers. Digitized & searchable! Free trial

www.myheritage.com/Archives

[Big Island Volcano Tours](#) Visit Big Island's Active Volcano. Departures Daily. Book Yours Today.

bigislandvolcanotours.com/OnSale

A nonprofit group set up to help Kirk Caldwell pick appointees and to put on inaugural events will make public the names of its donors in response to media inquiries.

City Councilwoman Ann Koba-ya-shi had urged that the names of donors be disclosed to avoid the possible appearance of undue influence, especially since Caldwell had made transparency a priority for his administration.

Meanwhile, the mayor confirmed that Harry Mattson, the Caldwell adviser paid to organize and evaluate candidates for department heads and other mayoral patronage jobs, is himself no longer being considered for a position with the city.

The Mayoral Transition Committee was set up by Caldwell's supporters as a 501(c)(4) federal nonprofit corporation to oversee transition matters. Its main responsibilities are to coordinate the application and interviewing process for the selection of department heads and other mayoral appointees, and inauguration activities including last month's swearing-in ceremony and an inauguration luau scheduled for Saturday night at Moana-lua Gardens.

Lex Smith, the committee's president and secretary, said the organization will disclose the names of its donors in the coming days in response to media inquiries.

Carmille Lim, executive director of Common Cause Hawaii, applauded the action, saying it would avoid the appearance that parties could be exerting influence over the mayor anonymously. "My concern is it could be used as a way to circumvent disclosure laws," Lim said, noting that campaign expenditures are capped.



Harry Mattson:
The adviser paid to evaluate candidates for the Caldwell administration is no longer being considered for a post with the city

Kobayashi said transparency in the selection process is critical given the stakes involved. "The people appointed are going to be running some very important departments," Koba-ya-shi said. "The people should know where the money is coming from."

Sixteen appointees have been announced so far. Caldwell said others are expected to be announced later this week and that a full Cabinet is expected to be in place no later than the end of the month.

Caldwell said he doesn't want to know who is donating to his transition committee, to avoid any appearance that he is being influenced by those donors.

"If I knew who contributed, the next thing you would be saying is, 'Isn't that influencing your decision?' So I purposely do not want to know who contributed for that very reason," the mayor said.

While the city budget set aside \$10,000 for inauguration activities, the Caldwell administration made a decision not to use taxpayer funds, but only private money the committee raised, administration officials said.

Tony Baldomero, associate director of the state Campaign Spending Commission, said Caldwell could have used his campaign account to pay for inauguration expenses and other "ordinary and necessary expenses incurred in connection with the candidate's duties" as an elected official, but not the selection process for appointees.

Caldwell said he did not think it was appropriate to use campaign funds for nonelection activities.

Bill Kaneko, leader of Gov. Neil Abercrombie's 2010 transition team, said inauguration expenses were paid for by donors via a Hawaii not-for-profit that did not obtain a federal tax-exempt status. Donor names were disclosed after a media request, he said.

An employment agency processed 4,000 applications for appointed positions, Kaneko said. The agency was paid with money left in Abercrombie's congressional campaign account, an allowable use, he said.

Mattson, a key strategist for Caldwell during his hard-fought mayoral campaign, was given a \$10,000-a-month contract for four months to oversee activities related to hiring department heads and other mayoral appointees. This included collecting applications, sifting through them and determining who should be interviewed, Caldwell said.

"We have 24 directors, 24 deputy directors and other political appointees," Caldwell said. "We interviewed lots and lots of people."

While Caldwell supporters pointed out that President Barack Obama's 2008 transition team included paid workers, it is uncertain whether any individual has been paid to head a transition committee for a Hawaii

governor or mayor as Mattson has.

"He pretty much spent full time working," Caldwell said. "I decided he should be compensated for his hard work."

Caldwell said that while Mattson initially was being considered for a position in the administration, a decision was made Monday to scrap that move.

Mattson said Caldwell made the decision.

Mattson in 2007 was convicted of failing to file tax returns and had been ordered to pay \$63,834 in restitution, a situation that would have barred him from taking a position with the city until he paid it off, Caldwell said. Mattson said he is current with his payments under a plan approved by state court and the state Department of Taxation.

Copyright (c) Honolulu Star-Advertiser