

## **Comment requests sent by the Lago Vista Watchdog, Oct. 13, 2026**

Sent from the newsroom inbox. Text as sent.

### **1. North Lake Travis Chamber of Commerce**

From: newsroom@lagovistawatchdog.com

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Date: Oct. 13, 2026

Subject: Request for comment: chamber hotel tax payments and IRS filings

Ms. Sargent,

I'm writing from the Lago Vista Watchdog, an independent local news site. We are publishing a story about the city's hotel tax payments to the chamber in 2026 and the chamber's public IRS filings. We want the chamber's side included, and we will publish any response in full context.

The story reports these points from public records:

1. On April 1, 2026, the city paid the chamber \$30,000. At the April 2 council meeting, you said the chamber received "less than half" of its request the day before.
2. The IRS Tax Exempt Organization Search lists Form 990-N e-Postcards for the chamber (EIN 74-2470396) for tax years 2016, 2018, and 2021 through 2025, each saying gross receipts were "not greater than" \$50,000.
3. The chamber's Form 990-EZ returns show gross receipts of \$145,916 for 2017, \$163,988 for 2019, and \$114,090 for 2020. Under the IRS rule, a group may file the e-Postcard only if its gross receipts average \$50,000 or less over the filing year and the two years before it.

Our questions:

- What were the chamber's total gross receipts for each year from 2021 through 2025?
- Why did the chamber file the e-Postcard rather than Form 990-EZ for those

years, and for 2016 and 2018?

- Has the chamber filed, or does it plan to file, amended or full returns for any of those years? Has the IRS contacted the chamber about them?
- Will the chamber share its three most recent annual returns, which federal rules require an exempt group to make available?
- What did the \$30,000 paid on April 1 reimburse?
- Is there anything else you'd like readers to know?

The story is being published now. We will update it with any response you send by replying to this email.

Thank you,  
Jack Britton  
Editor, Lago Vista Watchdog  
newsroom@lagovistawatchdog.com

## **2. Mayor Pro Tem Norma Owen**

From: newsroom@lagovistawatchdog.com  
To: CouncilPlace4@lagovistatexas.gov  
Date: Oct. 13, 2026  
Subject: Request for comment: April 1 chamber payment

Mayor Pro Tem Owen,

I'm writing from the Lago Vista Watchdog, an independent local news site. We are publishing a story about the city's \$30,000 payment to the chamber on April 1, 2026, and we want your account included in full context.

The story reports these points from public records:

- At the April 2 council meeting, Council Member Benefield read aloud an email he said City Manager Charles West sent at 9:24 on April 1. It said that without supporting documentation, and based on the city attorney's advice, he would not direct a check at that time. Benefield said a 9:41 email asked staff to process a \$30,000 check.
- On the meeting video, a council member described finding a provision that money failing an audit would have to be asked back, called it "the one item that was a workaround that happened between the time that Charles said, I can't do that," and said "we may have been out on a limb on this one without that."

Benefield later said this account came from you.

Our questions:

- Were those your remarks on April 2?
- Did you discuss the payment with Mr. West on April 1, before the check was issued? If so, what did you discuss?
- Who decided to issue the \$30,000 check, and on what authority?
- What did you mean by "workaround" and "out on a limb"?
- Is there anything else you'd like readers to know?

The story is being published now. We will update it with any response you send by replying to this email.

Thank you,  
Jack Britton  
Editor, Lago Vista Watchdog  
[newsroom@lagovistawatchdog.com](mailto:newsroom@lagovistawatchdog.com)