

NEWS

Senator Gary Siplin requests that Governor Bush appoint Financial Oversight Committee for Town of Eatonville

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ORLANDO – Upon receipt of petitions from citizens of Eatonville, Sen. Gary Siplin (D) Orlando, sent a letter to Governor Jeb Bush requesting that he appoint a Financial Oversight Committee for the Township of Eatonville.

Sen. Siplin stated, “When the financial condition of the Town was clearly determined by an independent audit, the citizens of Eatonville requested that I assist them by asking the Governor to step in and appoint an oversight committee to handle the finances of the Township. I can not stand idly by and let the rich heritage of the Town of Eatonville be lost.”

When it was noted that the Township had fallen into a state of mismanagement, so grave that it had defaulted on payments to its employees, Sen. Siplin asked the Joint Legislative Audit Committee to perform an audit of the Town’s financial status. The audit was completed, with the Mayor’s response and presented as Report No. 2004-178 by the Auditor General’s office.

On April 8, 2004, the citizens of Eatonville were shocked to learn of the current condition of their township. The Auditor General’s office presented the “Town of Eatonville Operational Audit for the period October 1, 2001, through March 31, 2003, and Selected Actions Taken Prior and Subsequent Thereto.” After this presentation, many of the

residents requested that Sen. Siplin ask the Governor to appoint an oversight committee.

Section 218.503(g)1, Florida Statutes gives the Governor the authority to appoint a financial emergencies board to oversee the activities of the local government entity. Sen. Siplin urged the Governor to immediately use his authority under this section to appoint a financial oversight board to conduct the finances of the Town of Eatonville, otherwise the Town of Eatonville will be in danger of insolvency and may even cease to exist.

Sen. Siplin also encouraged the Governor to appoint the members of the Eatonville Oversight Committee appointed by Sen. Siplin last year, when the problems in Eatonville were first brought to his attention.

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