

5/19/22

Dear City Council members,

I am writing you today to express concerns over a recent parental request that was made to Newburyport Youth Services to obtain public records for Miz Diamond Wigfall, the drag performer who was hired to DJ the NYS drag show/teen dance at the Masonic Lodge on Friday, May 13, 2022.

On that day, a request was made by a parent for documentation related to Miz Wigfall's qualifications to perform around high school-aged children. This specific request was for the following: a copy Miz Wigfall's W-9 form, a copy of Miz Wigfall's independent contractor agreement, a copy of Miz Wigfall's contractor invoice, and a copy of Miz Wigfall's CORI background check results.

Upon receipt of the request, a member of the NYS team, Andrew Levine, replied that every adult in attendance had undergone "a successful CORI check," including Miz Wigfall. Unfortunately, no other documentation was included in Mr. Levine's response, as was requested by the parent. Mr. Levine provided NO specific paperwork, offering only his assurance that everything had been verified. This is completely unacceptable.

As I'm sure members of City Council are now painfully aware, the manner in which Newburyport Youth Services has gone about promoting and addressing parents' specific concerns with regard to the drag show has been suspect at best. From the beginning, NYS has intentionally misled members of the community with both their advertising of the event and their misrepresentation of Miz Wigfall as a suitable performer for young people.

Let's look at the facts. At first, the event in question was billed as a "drag show," only to be rebranded a "teen dance" when several parents expressed their concerns. In addition, NYS knowingly promoted the event through an Instagram-only post—instead of through their traditional website—so that tech-savvy children with social media accounts would be privy to the event before their parents could intercept. Once introduced to the drag show through Instagram, children could easily access Miz Wigfall's online portfolio of filth, including lewd dances, pornographic music videos demonstrating various sex acts and a series of still photos showing Miz Wigfall in variety of partially-nude poses, all of which are completely inappropriate for children of any age.

And if that were not enough, NYS has now refused to provide the proper documentation to those parents who have asked for it. How are adults supposed to make an informed decision as to whether or not their child should attend any event if their legitimate concerns are not being heard or addressed? If Miz Wigfall's CORI and other paperwork were in order as Mr. Levine claimed it was, then shouldn't this information have been readily available to parents? Why would NYS deliberately hide this information from public view? Whether NYS likes it or not, parents have a right to see it.

Make no mistake, this is negligence and deceit on the part of NYS. Members of our community who naturally assumed that Miz Wigfall had been properly vetted are now skeptical of the motives of NYS and are questioning their absolute lack of transparency. We are asking City Council how Newburyport Youth Services can be trusted in the future to make decisions on behalf of our children when they clearly can't be trusted to provide parents with adequate assurances that our children will be protected from harmful content at one of their events.

I urge members of City Council to consider the blatant disregard for parental concern shown by NYS over this event and hold Newburyport Youth Services accountable.

Respectfully,
Mark H.