

Transaction	Account	Amount	Balance
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	1000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	2000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	3000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	4000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	5000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	6000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	7000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	8000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	9000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	10000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	11000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	12000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	13000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	14000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	15000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	16000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	17000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	18000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	19000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	20000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	21000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	22000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	23000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	24000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	25000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	26000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	27000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	28000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	29000.00
Groundworx	00000001	1000.00	30000.00

Groundworx Documents Reveal 2013 Ward 4 Candidate Chris Price Was Being Paid By Groundworx, and Dryden's In-laws Would Make Millions on Deal



January 2013: Chris Price announces his candidacy for Ward 4 council seat.

On January 22nd, 2013 local Realtor, Chris Price, announced his candidacy for Ward 4 councilman; and on March 7th of 2013 Price officially registered to run as a candidate for Ward 4 City Council. That very same day the Mississippi Ethics

Commission delivered an opinion stating that Price could not earn a commission and participate in votes on Groundworx. Sources tell the Hattiesburg Patriot that Price was to earn \$200,000 if Groundworx became a reality. ([Read that article by clicking here](#))

The very next day, on March 8th, after registering as a candidate, Groundworx paid Price \$2,000 for “Logistics



The image is a screenshot of a spreadsheet with multiple columns and rows. The columns appear to contain dates, names, and monetary values. The rows list numerous transactions, likely representing the payments mentioned in the text. The data is too small to read accurately, but it shows a series of entries over time, consistent with the timeline described in the text.

Groundworx payments to Chris Price. Click to enlarge.

Environmental Management.” Price had outstanding invoices with Groundworx for \$5,000 dated January 1, 2013 and another for \$5,000 dated February 1, 2013. Price dropped out of the race on March 22nd but continued to be paid fees by Groundworx. From the period March 8th, 2013 to May 22, 2014 Price billed \$101,000 to Groundworx for “Logistics Environmental Management,” and has been paid \$52,000 by Groundworx. Interestingly, Price’s request to the Mississippi Ethics Commission made no mention about the fees he was receiving from Groundworx, nor the money Groundworx already owed Price. The opinion requested by Price only asked the Commission to address Price earning a commission. Price was and continues to be a staunch advocate of the Groundworx system.

When Price stepped down as a candidate he told the media

“because of the nature of my profession, I feel that where I can most effectively serve the community now is by continuing with this work, which is a critical part of Hattiesburg’s future.”



Councilwoman Mary
Dryden

Price was the favorite to win; however his departure led to an endorsement of Mary Dryden. Five months prior Dryden moved from Dixie to Hattiesburg and qualified to run for City Council three months later. Interestingly, Dryden had her own potential conflict of interest with Groundworx, but not as obvious as Price's conflict.

Dryden's son in law is Joseph Tatum III. His father is Chip Tatum, who owns Tatum Tiber. Tatum Timber was paid \$156,000 by Groundworx for options to acquire the land as spray fields for waste water. If Groundworx were to be implemented by the city, Tatum Timber would have made an estimated \$10,000,000 to \$16,000,000 on the deal. Some described the potential win fall as "generational wealth" for her son in law Joseph Tatum III.

Not surprisingly, Dryden was one of the strongest advocates for implementing Groundworx. Dryden even went so far as to speak publicly to the news about the pending litigation between the city and Groundworx. She commented that the city was going to have to pay Groundworx \$6,000,000 in damages; this without so much as a court hearing on the matter. Discussing pending litigation is never done by elected members of government because it can have an adverse affect for taxpayers when settlements are to be negotiated or trials are to occur. Comments such as Dryden's served not only to taint

public opinion, but to mislead the public about the legalities of the contract and the legal obligations of the City.



Payments made from Groundworx to Dryden's in-laws. Dryden's in-laws stood to make millions if the project was implemented. CLICK TO ENLARGE

It seems that Groundworx is a critical part of certain family's financial best interest, but not in the interest of the rate payers. At times Dryden and Price look more like a shills for Groundworx than people advocating for their constituents.

“Shill” typically refers to someone who purposely gives onlookers the impression that they are an enthusiastic independent customer of a seller (or marketer of ideas) for whom they are secretly working. Shilling is illegal in many circumstances and in many jurisdictions because of the potential for fraud and damage; however if a shill does not place uninformed parties at a risk of loss, but merely generates “buzz,” the shill’s actions may be legal. For example, a person planted in an audience to laugh and applaud when desired (see [claque](#)), or to participate in on-stage activities as a “random member of the audience,” is a type of legal shill.

Do you think Mayoral and council candidates should disclose financial connections with companies doing business with or seeking the business of the municipality?

Do you think Dryden have recused herself from Groundworx voted for moral or ethical reasons?

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