

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Spokesman-Review Editor Placed on Administrative Leave

Spokane, WA – August 11, 2026 – Rob Curley, executive editor of *The Spokesman-Review*, was placed on administrative leave last Friday in the wake of several personnel complaints, Publisher William “Stacey” Cowles confirmed Tuesday.

Staff members of Comma Journalism Labs, the non-profit engaged to assume ownership of *The Spokesman-Review* were also involved in complaints and have been asked to work outside the newspaper offices until an investigation is completed, Cowles said.

“I want to assure readers, donors and partners that these events have no bearing on our transaction with Comma,” Cowles said. Comma and Cowles announced May 12th that the nonprofit had raised \$2 million in cash and pledges, triggering the transfer of the newspaper and \$2mm in matching funds from Cowles Company, owner of *The Spokesman* to Comma.

Cowles said Rob Curley remains the newspaper’s Executive Editor and that news operations would be managed by Managing Editor Lindsey Treffry during the investigation.

He said the newspaper is engaging legal counsel who will oversee an independent workplace investigation into the complaints. Counsel will be required to have no prior engagement with Cowles or related entities. Cowles would not disclose the nature of the complaints.

“We are committed to conducting an independent and fair process to resolve conflicts, preserve the privacy of those involved and stay focused on the mission,” Cowles said. He said the investigation could take two to three weeks. “The ultimate goal is to fulfill the vision that community journalism be rooted in the community, its schools, universities and institutions,” he said.

Cowles said the closing date for a transaction with Comma is imminent but would be delayed several weeks as a result of the investigation.

Cowles Company is a 132-year-old, family-owned enterprise engaged in real estate, forestry, media, papermaking and venture capital. Stacey Cowles serves as its president.

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