

To the residents and voters of Howard County,

Hello. I am writing this letter to the editor to clear up a few things from last fall's election. My name is Richard Hollenbeck and at the time was employed with the Howard County Sheriff and had run for Sheriff. During my campaign I was placed on administrative leave for a policy violation. To be clear this was a non-disciplinary administrative leave.

When I was placed on leave, I was told that it would not be released to the press. Unfortunately personnel within the Sheriff's Office felt it necessary to release information that was not authorized to be released. This included accusations that I had committed theft, had resigned, or been terminated. None of this is true.

While I did eventually resign, I did so after the election and with the advice of my attorney. It was not forced upon me by the Sheriff's Office. I was not investigated for theft though it appeared the Sheriff's Office contemplated such action.

It was reported by KTTN news that I had misappropriated county funds and that the Winneshiek County Sheriff was investigating. I have since found out that the Winneshiek County Sheriff declined to be involved. I also confirmed the Howard County Sheriff made no formal complaint or record of any investigation into a theft investigation.

Truth is I was always eligible for election and had never suspended my campaign. This seemed to cause some confusion with voters as to whether or not I was able to be elected Sheriff. I apologize to the voters and hold no ill will as the information released was false and misleading. This was not my doing.

A second issue occurred in early October. I was called into a meeting at the office under the impression that myself and Rick Busch were to be told of some concerns of how we were conducting our campaigns. This was one sided and was an opportunity for Rick to challenge me on how I was conducting my campaign.

I was put into a position to defend myself against complaints that has nothing to do with my work performance even though I was on duty and at the Sheriff's Office. One concern was that I was campaigning on duty which is ironic as this meeting put me in a position to have actually done so. Fortunately when I brought my concerns to the State Ethics Board they told me it was a minor issue and they would take no action.

This is the truth as to what occurred. I have requested two separate investigations into misconduct from Howard County Employees. Unfortunately it appears neither were or are being investigated.

I had received a lot of support from the community throughout the election as well as after. For this I am very grateful.

Take Care and thank you.

Richard Hollenbeck