

Public Statement From Councilman Alan Snow City of Carthage Ward 4

After consulting with my attorney, I have decided to make a public statement about the current issues with the Carthage City Council. I have been on the council for six years, chairman of the Budget Ways & Means (BW&M) committee for the last five years, and city liaison to the Carthage Water & Electric Plant (CWEP) board for the last five years. There have been instances in the last year that have caused me to question the information that I have received pertaining to council business. That is what has caused me to lose trust in the Mayor and the City Administrator (CA).

For nearly one year, we have had a large citizen attendance at our council meetings with most of the public comments asking for a change in the CA's office and Mayor. During that time a group of citizens formed a group named Carthage Citizens United (CCU). I was asked many times to ask them to stop attending meetings and stop their request for a change in leadership. I was also told that I am working with them. I am not, and never have been, a member of CCU. I do not know who the members are, how they communicate, or attend any of their meetings. I believe that citizens have the right to organize for support of any belief that they want to support. I have also never met with any of the new council members that were recently sworn into office. Based on materials from their campaigns, I could draw a conclusion that they were not happy with the leadership of the Mayor and CA.

I have asked the mayor on multiple occasions during this past year to ask the CA to resign or fire him. The mayor has told me that he will not do that. When I asked the mayor his plan to regain the trust of the citizens, he told me that we need to just move on. I told anyone that asked me how we get this to end was for the CA to be gone.

During this time, I have not made any negative public comments about the mayor or CA. Recently, my character and integrity have been questioned in comments by individuals and city employees. I have continuously said that everyone has the right to free speech granted to them by the United States Bill of Rights. The most recent rumor was that I made comments in the last council meeting about cutting city employee positions in the upcoming budget. My comments are archived in the video of that meeting and can be found at minute mark 52 and minute mark 1:45:40 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6zjRFgrg7k>. Someone is trying to use this to create fear in the city staff that I have ill intentions toward city employees. As I stated to the Joplin Globe reporter in his story, "The city employees do not work for the mayor, CA, or the council. We all work for the citizens of Carthage!"

Next, I would like to address two issues that some believe are driving the current activity of the council:

First: I have known Mark Peterson since before I was on the council. He is allowed the presumption of innocence until proven guilty in a court of law. The council was told that there was evidence that he had committed a crime while serving as the Parks Director. The council needed to hire a forensic auditor to investigate further to support the evidence. The council hired an auditor and were told that evidence was found, but that we could not see the evidence

because it was part of an ongoing investigation. Contrary to that, when the council was told that a crime had been committed with the Carthage Convention and Visitors Bureau and a forensic auditor was hired, the council was given the entire report from the auditor, even though it was part of an ongoing investigation. I affirm that both cases are still ongoing cases in the courts and should be tried in the courts and not by the members of the city council, city hall, or the citizens.

Second: The council was told that the CWEP board had committed a crime because they had violated the charter and ordinances of the city. The closed session that resulted in the board being dismissed had little discussion about the violations and more discussion about threats that had been reported toward city employees. To this date, no names of who was threatened or who was accused of threatening has been presented. At that time, I suggested that we get the board together and talk about the issues that were being discussed. I was told that they had a chance, and they did not comply with the requests of the CA and needed to be removed. I have been the liaison to the CWEP for the last five years and know the members of the board to be respectable members of the community. They were uncertain what was being requested, because it had never been requested before. They compiled an over 200 page document with every position and salary ranges for the full staff of CWEP. Both the mayor and I told them that should be sufficient for what is being requested. The CA said that was not what he had requested. After they were dismissed, at the next meeting Councilperson Cossey made a motion to reconsider the vote to dismiss. There was discussion about how many votes it took to reconsider the question. We were told that it took seven votes and only six members voted to reconsider. I believe that vote further lost the trust of the community. Later, the mayor, city attorney, and two members of the board met and came to an agreement that was approved by the council to issue a joint statement stating that the board had not violated any ordinances or the charter and that it was a miscommunication. I have since heard the mayor and the CA say that they had violated ordinances. The board was reappointed, and a committee of two council persons and two board members was appointed by the mayor to review the ordinances pertaining to the board's operation of CWEP. After one meeting, the mayor determined that there was no need for further committee meetings and told the committee that no more meetings would be held. To this date, no ordinances have been brought to the council or any council committees for review or changes.

These are just two examples of the lack of trust that I have had with the mayor and the CA that have happened with the council during the past year. I have many more that I could list.

As I reported at the last council meeting, the overwhelming majority of constituents that have sent me messages in support of the council proceeding to impeach the mayor and dismiss the city administrator re-enforces that this process should be continued. I have to try to be a public servant that listened to what the people that elected me want and do what is in the best interest of the City of Carthage.

Alan Snow
City of Carthage Councilman Ward 4