

RESOLUTION 2021-15

RESOLUTION OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RE-AFFIRMING LA PORTE COUNTY'S COMMITMENT TO FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL INTEGRITY WHILE URGING THE AUDITOR TO 'CEASE AND DESIST' MAKING BASELESS CLAIMS OF 'CORRUPTION' WHICH SERVES TO DAMAGE THE COUNTY'S REPUTATION WITH CITIZENS, INVESTORS, THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS.

WHEREAS, as elected officials of La Porte County, we have no greater obligation and duty than to ensure the financial and operational integrity of La Porte County government, and

WHEREAS, working collaboratively with the previous County Auditor, this body takes great pride in having secured an A+ rating for the county from the Standard & Poor's (S&P) rating agency for financial integrity and fiscal responsibility that allowed the county to obtain the best possible interest rates, saving significant taxpayer dollars on the Michigan City Courthouse \$19.45 million bond issuance, and

WHEREAS, the current Auditor seems most intent on using taxpayer-funded public office to settle personal and political scores and, in so doing, neglected one of the most basic responsibilities of the Auditor which was making timely payment on a key debt issuance of the county, namely the \$611,387.50 bond payment that was due on the Michigan City Courthouse bonds on July 15th thereby causing a "technical default" requiring the county's financial advisors to file a formal admission on an SEC-monitored website and jeopardizing the county's hard-earned A+ bond rating with a possible 'ratings downgrade' from S&P, and

WHEREAS, a refunding bond resolution was scheduled to be heard by this body at the last commission meeting would have provided for \$20-25,000.00 yearly in taxpayer savings on the \$5.5 million debt remaining on the 2014 lease for energy-savings equipment; the resolution had to be postponed due to the Auditor's neglect and failure to make the Courthouse bond payment on time as required, and

WHEREAS, rather than aid the county's continuous efforts to put our 'best foot forward' with the financial community, rating services, underwriters, prospective investors, and businesses considering a potential investment or expansion to

La Porte County, as an example, the Auditor used the evening before Thanksgiving for attack-dog style postings on his Facebook page encouraging readers to "mock Shaw, Sheila and Rich all you want. Continue stating how immoral, indecent, corrupt and pathetic they are." Encouraging harassment and hate speech directed at other elected officials is inappropriate, is conduct unbecoming by the auditor and is out of order, and

WHEREAS, the longest serving La Porte County Councilman, Council Vice-President Mark Yagelski specifically took the Auditor to task over seven months ago urging the Auditor to "immediately stop these incessant, unfounded personal attacks on the integrity of our county attorney and two of our county commissioners" and specifically challenged the Auditor to take "any evidence of wrongdoing to the Indiana State Police, County Prosecutor or the FBI Public Integrity Unit," and

WHEREAS, this county has benefited from many years of unbiased and objective financial advice from our well-respected certified financial advisor, Karl Cender, who also advises numerous other area cities, counties and town; yet again in attack-dog style social media posts, the Auditor condemned Mr. Cender in another inappropriate Thanksgiving Eve post inferring that the county has used Cender's services only because, as the Auditor charged, he is a "personal crony extraordinaire" of the County Attorney who "throws county money at" Mr. Cender and "even vacations with Mr. Cender" although this is based on zero facts whatsoever and is

ORIGINAL

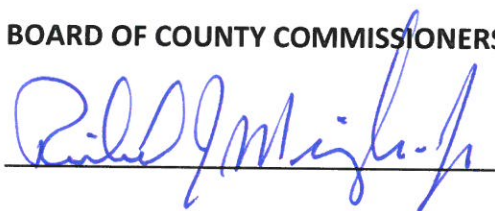
completely false and untrue. The county attorney interacts with Cender & Company at the express direction of a majority of this Commission. However, the commission would be remiss if we did not acknowledge Mr. Cender's significant guidance and assistance to this county in helping resolve the 2011 tax mess, and

WHEREAS, the County Auditor's bizarre Thanksgiving Eve posts included an equally absurd claim that the County Attorney had a "vested interest" in the controversial D&M operation on 400 West continuing to operate – even though the County Attorney, at the specific direction of this commission, obtained two stay orders against this operation – both in 2019 and 2020; then the Auditor urged a "higher arbiter" to bring a lawsuit against La Porte County, the very county that he serves as Chief Financial Officer, for its alleged failure to enforce its "own zoning codes," which is in complete ignorance of the relevant facts and law in the case.

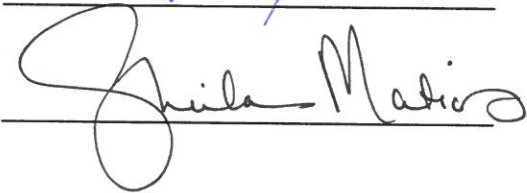
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THIS BODY CONDEMNS THE FAILURE OF THE AUDITOR TO DO THE JOB THE TAXPAYERS PAY HIM TO DO WHICH IS TO PAY THE APPROVED BILLS OF THE COUNTY IN A TIMELY MANNER – SPECIFICALLY HIS FAILURE ON JULY 15TH TO REMIT THE COUNTY'S BOND PAYMENT WHICH PLACED THE COUNTY IN TECHNICAL DEFAULT, RISKING A DOWNGRADE IN THE COUNTY'S A+ BOND RATING AND CAUSING A POSTPONEMENT IN THE REFUNDING BOND ISSUANCE THAT WOULD HAVE SAVED TAXPAYERS 20-25K A YEAR. WE ALSO DEMAND HE CEASE AND DESIST ISSUING HIS BASELESS, UNPROVEN AND DANGEROUS CLAIMS OF "CORRUPTION" AMONG COUNTY OFFICIALS THAT ONLY HURT THIS COUNTY'S IMAGE IN THE EYES OF THE CITIZENS WE REPRESENT, AS WELL AS THE FINANCIAL COMMUNITY, RATING SERVICES, UNDERWRITERS, PROSPECTIVE INVESTORS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

All of which is resolved this 1st day of December 2021.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



NAY



ORIGINAL

< Tim Stabosz for La Porte County Auditor's Post ...

this injustice, the source of which, I am personally convinced, is because there was some kind of wink and nod deal involving the county "waiving D&M through," because of all the money involved with the valuable sand. You need a higher arbiter to come down on La Porte County. Sheila and Rich are going to cover up for the county's sordid history on this matter, as they always do.

1d Like Reply



Write a reply...



Author

Tim Stabosz for La Porte County Auditor Deb Veatch Well, one reason to follow the law here is because the County Prosecutor is willing to be selective in his enforcement of the law. Since his political patron, Shaw Friedman, wants these satire pieces stopped, the prosecutors will seek to have them stopped, which puts Brandon at risk. Stay within the confines of the law. Mock Shaw, Sheila, and Rich all you want. Continue stating how immoral, indecent, corrupt, and pathetic they are. But don't advocate for the defeat of anyone in an election, who is up for re-election (and especially) has announced that they are running.



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Deb Veatch

Keep a watchful eye on the bills that could be sent to you from Mr. Friedman regarding his personal attacks towards me. He made misstatements about conversations I had at the commissioner's meetings and is now going with the narrative that all of the sand mining activities are my fault. He states what a wonderful job he did prolonging the mining sites and that my dollars and his lawyer selection, would wow the world and stop what the county allowed to start in 2015.

Like · Reply · 2d



Author

Tim Stabosz for La Porte County Auditor

Deb Veatch I hate to tell you this, but my guess is that he deliberately steered you on a path where he knew you would get nowhere, because he has a vested interest in that sand mine continuing to operate. Anywhere in county business there are big \$\$\$, there is virtually always the outstretched hand of a toll taker of Shaw Friedman.

Like · Reply · 1d



Deb Veatch

Tim Stabosz for La Porte County Auditor you have a great Thanksgiving and we will pick this up tomorrow

Like · Reply · 1d

Most Relevant is selected, so some replies may have been filtered out.

Dusty Snarky Schoff

How about sender and company how much we pay them for the non existent sewage treatment plant I used to hear them talk about in the regional sewer district boards that nothing happened with? How much do we pay to people that don't produce?

Like · Reply · 2d

Author

Tim Stabosz for La Porte County Auditor

Dusty Snarky Schoff Cender and Company is a personal crony, extraordinaire, of Shaw Friedman. Karl Cender vacations with Mr. Friedman, I am told, by the highest level county officials. (I highly doubt Friedman has any real, authentic friends, so he pals around with people who he throws county money at, who are really just his sycophants. Pathetic.)

Like · Reply · 2d



Dusty Snarky Schoff

There's plenty of other stuff we pay for that we proly shouldn't be. How much we give MCR partners a month and for what? They use to pay MCR and then give reardon and check too I believe wanna check that for me?

Like · Reply · 2d

Deb Veatch

Tim Stabosz for La Porte County Auditor On the in public format Randy will stand and speak for us. On the public forum, we both speak. Again this has only been to court one time as being a business. The business did not win the case. At that time everyone wanted us to separate our identities. We said no. What we did do was on the paperwork that was to be entered into court records, we marked next to the messages of RGV or DCV or Both. It was about one year of messages and entries on different Facebook pages. By the time the pages were mark the vast majority was signed BOTH. WE ARE BOTH COMMITTED TO ENDING THE SAND PITS THAT OUR GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOWED BEHIND OUR HOME..

Like · Reply · 1d

 Author

Tim Stabosz for La Porte County Auditor

Deb Veatch That's all fine and dandy, Deb/Randy. I honor you for the solemnity and longevity and commitment of your marriage. But the point I would simply make is that Randy is a public figure, since he is at the Commission meetings every single time. And to me, on a public forum, it is appropriate to know which of you is therefore actually writing. I remind you that I am an ally of both of you, and agree 100% with you, that the county has failed to enforce its own zoning codes regarding this operation. I think a suit at higher levels is, unfortunately, necessary...although I think Randy has been incredibly valiant, stalwart, and courageous, in front of the Commission, and I admire him for standing up so directly to this injustice, the source of which, I am personally convinced, is because there was some kind of wink and nod deal involving the county "waiving D&M through," because of all the money involved with the valuable sand. You need a higher arbiter to come down on La Porte County. Sheila and Rich are going to cover up for the county's sordid history on this matter, as they always do.

Like · Reply · 1d



Friday, April 16, 2021

Councilman to auditor: Shut up

Yagelski: Unfounded personal attacks can hurt economic development efforts

By JEFF MAVES
Staff Writer

La PORTE — La Porte County's longest-serving elected county official is telling one of its newest to stop attacking the integrity of the county attorney and other elected officials, saying it's bad for business.

La Porte County Council vice president Mark Yagelski issued a statement Wednesday demanding that newly elected County Auditor Tim Stabosz "immediately stop these incessant, unfounded personal

sworn in about 'corruption', the county's 'operating authority' being completely rotten, and a 'culture of fear, terror and duress'."

Stabosz, a Republican, has issued several press releases criticizing County Attorney Shaw Friedman, along with commissioners Sheila Matias, a Democrat, and Richard Mrozinski, a Republican.

Those attacks have led to a civil lawsuit filed by Friedman in St. Joseph County Circuit Court, accusing Stabosz of slandering his reputation.



YAGELSKI



STABOSZ

The auditor has until May 19 to formally respond to the suit and this week filed a motion to dismiss, claiming St. Joseph County is an improper venue and the suit should be filed in La Porte County.

Yagelski cited an op/ed piece Stabosz wrote for The Herald-Dispatch in which he claimed the commissioners have surrendered their "moral authority" to Friedman, and county government is "an authoritarian structure reminiscent of Soviet Russia."

Yagelski called it over the

top. "Our new Auditor is either reading too many Marvel comic books or spending too much time on video games as he comes up with these dramatic, ridiculous over-the-top depictions of county government."

"It's time he put up or shut up. I say again to him — if you have any evidence of wrongdoing — take it to the Indiana State Police, the La Porte County Prosecutor or the FBI Public Integrity Unit. Otherwise, shut up and do the job the taxpayers elected you to do."

In response, Stabosz issued

See YAGELSKI, page A2

YAGELSKI

From page A1

a statement again blasting Friedman.

"Any time something bad is said about Shaw Friedman, and how he exerts undue influence upon county officials and employees, he rolls out these longstanding political cronies of his, people who are obligated to him, and are willing to do his bidding, because if they don't do what he says, they fear there will be political consequences to them.

"So they appease him. Then some of them, bizarrely, 'apologize' to me privately and back pedal," the auditor said.

"It just shows how Shaw Friedman is not a public servant, but exclusively a political figure, who has engaged in a reign of terror upon La Porte County, its employees, and elected officials of both political parties, for over a generation now."



FRIEDMAN

Yagelski said such statements are causing fiscal harm to the county.

"Site selectors for business prospects search carefully to see if a county's leadership is unified and is not embroiled in controversy. We've made great strides in recent years with economic development efforts and this nonsense threatens to derail that.

"For instance, we are in the finals of site selection for a big, vertical farming operation that would mean 176 jobs paying an average wage of \$35,000, and rather than helping us, the auditor hurts our efforts with site selectors with these ridiculous, unfounded attacks claiming corruption and 'moral abdication' by county officials."

He also said the statements can hurt efforts to secure federal grants.

"I'm lobbying for federal money for the Franklin Street Bridge and what I've heard from federal officials is, 'What in the world is going on in your county with this auditor?'"

"I want the auditor to stop this nonsense now."

But Stabosz said the county's "biggest problems with economic development are not about what Tim Stabosz has been saying ... it is the form of influence peddling engaged in by people like Shaw Friedman, and quietly tolerated by minions of his such as Mark Yagelski.

"People 'pass by' La Porte County, in terms of investing, because they see the agent they have to deal with is not

Commissioners say county 'getting a black eye'

Two members of the La Porte County Board of Commissioners who have been on the receiving end of criticism from County Auditor Timothy Stabosz



MATIAS



MROZINSKI

responded with some criticism of their own at last week's meeting.

Commissioner Sheila Matias said, "The tone we have on the commission is of great concern to me" and to county employees.

"Employees are fearful; they say why are we focusing on so much negativity and judge-wudge words ... the concern I'm hearing is not people who are worried about retaliation and terrorism and conspiracy and dishonesty. They're just saying can we get back to like having a real nice tone here, where people can collaborate and cooperate and help each other and be respectful?"

"That's my hope, too," she said, "that we can hit the reset button and show that La Porte County government and La Porte County communities are respectful, are kind to one another, are caring and are honest."

She urged county employees to follow the chain of command and if they see wrongdoing

ing, "Blow the whistle, give us the evidence and we will work to exorcise any evil that's going on..."

But, she added, "Talk of Soviet Russia is overkill. We have to focus on honesty, not high drama. We don't want to be the laughing stock of the state.

"We don't want to give people any reason to think La Porte County is not a great place to invest, a great place to bring your business, a great place to move and bring your family ... a great place to live and work."

Board president Rich Mrozinski added, "We're getting a black eye. I hear from Indiana legislators and people call me and want to know what's going on with one commissioner and one auditor and one councilman who, rather than back our efforts to do something positive in the county, want to continue their own political agenda or personal vendetta to support hate and discontent..."

"It's got to stop," Mrozinski said. "We gotta move the county forward. We got people working their butts off to get something positive done for the county, not only in economic development but in countywide broadband, and we don't need distractions that make us look bad.

"It's uncalled for," he said, adding that in his time in government, he's "seen some disagreements, but nothing to the level of just continuous, continuous harassment."

- Jeff Mayes, Staff Writer

always the commissioners themselves, or the economic development professionals, but a nakedly self-interested attorney, who likes to stick his nose in where it doesn't belong, to get something for himself.

"As someone who invests for a living, I can tell you that that feels slimy, and turns investors off to La Porte County, time and again. And I've been told it."

Yagelski, a four-term county councilman, said questions about the conflict have been raised at the state level.

"Lobbying the Statehouse in Indy, they're asking the same questions. Remember the South Shore Double Track project? This became a model for the State of Indiana and the country on how to ask for and receive funding for this project. The key to this project was the three counties working hand in hand in the spirit of cooperation.

"It is now time for La Porte

County officials to step up and work hand in hand with the spirit of cooperation so we don't lose out on our fair share of money."

Stabosz said Yagelski is making such statements at the behest of Friedman.

"As far as Mr. Yagelski goes, he hasn't been challenged in a Democrat primary for as far back as I can remember, which means Mr. Friedman has been very happy with him indeed. And I have no doubt Mr. Friedman is quite happy with him for 'walking the plank' for him yet again, for what seems to be the umpteenth time now.

The fact of the matter is, Mark Yagelski has been pretty much at Shaw Friedman's beck and call, when it comes to defending Shaw Friedman's reputation, and attacking his enemies. It's unseemly, and just one more example of the way Mr. Friedman places undue influence upon county officials."