

Fire Chief finalist had Illinois job offer rescinded after bad publicity

According to the Benton (IL) Evening News, on Monday August 9, 2010, the Benton City Council voted "to hire a new fire chief, pending completion of pre-employment screening." The article continued, "commissioners approved Michael Quint of Watertown, Wis. (sic), to fill the position ..."

On August 10, 2010, the Cheyenne Herald suggested many of the eight finalists for fire chief in Cheyenne left much to be desired. Quint was one of the candidates.

On Monday, August 24, 2010, the Evening News reported, "The Benton City Council voted Monday to withdraw the offer of employment to Michael Quint as new fire chief." "Due to information obtained, we have withdrawn the offer to Mr. Quint," Benton Mayor Gary Kraft said.

The same guy had been finalist to become the new fire chief in Marshalltown, Iowa two weeks earlier. He was not chosen. Both cities made good decisions.

There was so much publicity about several of the candidates to become the new fire chief in Cheyenne. It is hard to imagine how the mayor or selection committee members could have been so in the dark about the controversies surrounding many of the guys. Just incredible.

To allow many of those guys to make the cut to eight is embarrassing. To invite the eight to come to Cheyenne for an interview - at their own expense or not - is even more embarrassing.

And this guy was not the worst of the bunch. Really. There were worse. And they all made the final eight - in the opinion of a selection committee. The best eight of 50 applicants. How could that be? How could that possibly be?

It is damaging to the City's reputation to be viewed as so inept at even hiring someone. The last out-of-town (not counting Castle Rock, Colorado) fire chief was also a bad choice. We need to do better.

The trees ... oh, the trees!

It wasn't so much that a few dozen trees were going to be taken down in Lions Park. Trees are being cut down all the time - even for parking lots, etc.

Kaysen's dilemma about removal of the trees came down to whether the National Guard was telling the truth and their contention that the trees have been costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars because they were operating "light" and had never complained, was true. Forget American Eagle. There is zero chance they will still be flying out of Cheyenne even in the near future - forget two years out.

If the Air National Guard truly has had problems about the trees and kept them to themselves - preferring to have to refuel sooner and carry lighter loads - someone needs a little discussion with that part-time general. The issue of trees on the east edge of Lions Park was never an issue until a newcomer Chamber dude fronted a frightened group that agreed to

anything and everything demanded by a temporary commuter airline and the trees were on that list.

Many of us hate the idea of destroying mature trees because it's so damned hard to get anything to grow in this soil. To deliberately take down trees for a questionable motive makes the decision even more difficult to stomach.

Just a few years ago, a very nice new, impressive community house was built in the path of departing airplanes and no one blinked an eye. Busy streets, Yellowstone and Central, are likewise in the path. No discussion has ever been considered about closing or diverting them.

People also are wondering just how important the trees removal is when it took Mayor Maybe months to decide their fate. American Eagle has been departing twice a day at the worst time of year for their wimpy airplanes and the trees remained and posed no problem to them.

Sometimes, Diane, "politics" means doing the right thing

Disliking county commissioner Diane Humphrey is almost impossible. As I've told so many people over the past few years, criticizing Diane is almost like stomping baby chicks. You can do it but it just doesn't feel right.

But I cannot allow to pass the statement she read into the record when she voted to extend the contract of county attorney Mark Voss for another year. She made it sound as though those of us who strongly believe Voss is incompetent and an embarrassment to Laramie County government as well as to Albany County residents somehow are practicing "politics" and she is above all of that.

First, we're not. And she's not, either.

Mark Voss is an employee. He is not an elected official. To practice "politics" on an employee would be kind of hard. Now, practicing "politics" on Diane herself is another matter. She is standing for reelection to her fourth term on November 2nd and voters certainly have the right to practice politics on her.

Mark Voss is a bully. He is loud, obnoxious and tries to be intimidating. To women. And children. He is just loud to men. And he is aggressive. Again, to women. Diane may fear him. I know from personal experience that she cannot stand up to pressure. She has admitted as much.

What rankled me most about her statement, her decision is just indefensible but voters can decide what they think of that in less than two months, was her posture about not playing "politics." Tell that to the guy she financially ruined. Tell that to him. He had the support of the county planner, the regional planning commission, the state, everyone who typically has a role in considering new subdivisions.

Two people in Laramie County, Diane Humphrey and Jeff Ketcham, ruined this guy. They went against all the advice and recommendations from people who knew best and denied his subdivision application. I've seen the plans and reviewed the various letters and results of the preparatory work required and it was a good subdivision and should have been approved. In my corner are all of the people, boards and government employees I mentioned above. In Diane and Jeff's corner are three nearby property owners.

Had Diane said she supported granting the incompetent Mark Voss another year's work because he was doing a bang-up job, that would have been bad enough. But, to pretend that she is above making "political decisions" that won't withstand scrutiny is ludicrous. She will make them.

Diane Humphrey wants to please. Sometimes she makes wrong choices and she'll own up to them. Sometimes. Not always.

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