

The City's fight against an elected official's rights is being led by Nancy Freudenthal - the Governor's wife!

Talk about weird!

You'd think that the City could use one of its multiple attorneys on the payroll or retained to defend its action of withholding executive committee minutes from one of its elected officials.

Perhaps because the mayor was confronted by an attorney who also represents his beloved daily newspaper ally, as well as representing the Wyoming Press Association, he thought that not just any attorney could wage his fight for secrecy. So, he enlisted the aid (highly paid aid, that is) of an attorney with Davis & Cannon, one Nancy Freudenthal.

For those unfamiliar with the woman who does television commercials in which she unabashedly proclaims herself the "First Lady of Wyoming," she is also an attorney - in addition to being that television personality.

The personality standoff being referred to in this story stems from one of the city councilmen wanting access to minutes of an executive session. The session in dispute is really not the issue - it could be any secret meeting that this administration generously tags an executive session. In spite of specific state law about what topics can warrant such a secret enclave, having a majority voting bloc of

eight allows this governing body to retreat behind closed doors for virtually anything - including what pizza toppings to order for the secret session.

The councilman is represented by one Bruce Moats, best known as the mouth piece for the WT-E and Press Association when the Legislature gets reckless enough to mention removing the sales tax exemption on newspapers and their advertising revenue.

Minutes of public meetings are kept and circulated not only to reflect what happened in those meetings and for historical purposes - but to allow others to challenge the accuracy of the minutes. The simple dropping of a word like "not" completely changes the accuracy of such minutes and unless someone other than obedient headnodders who have taken a vow of fealty has an opportunity to review the permanent record represented by meeting minutes, such an error will be preserved for posterity. Wrong, but preserved.

It is beyond absurd that the mayor thought, and he hoped for confirmation from the governor's wife, that executive sessions could be held and no minutes be made available to certain governing body members - whether in attendance or absent from that meeting. What are they trying to hide? How could the one

absent vote on a subject of that executive session when it came before the body for action later, without knowing what had transpired in the secret session? Or not knowing that the mayor was wrong about what had been done beyond the locked door and then minutes were withheld to prevent the revelation of error?

Attorney Moats rightly pointed out in his letter of January 4, 2008 to the mayor that "no purpose is served by denying such access and public policy is harmed by such a denial" - meaning withholding access to minutes of an executive session from a member of the governing body.

On January 17, 2008, the governor's wife advised Moats that his letter had been referred to her "for review and response."

Why her? Does she have any particular expertise in the field? Are all three of the employed city attorneys incapable of providing an opinion on a matter that seems so basic - so simple? One of those city attorneys represents the City during oral arguments before the Wyoming Supreme Court. Is he incapable, though, of researching and rendering a legal opinion on this issue?

Or is it because having the governor's wife, at substantial expense, offer that opinion over her name should intimidate?

Her opinion, the next day, was in support of this mayor's obsession for secrecy. She misrepresented W.S. § 16-4-405(b) when she wrote that "such minutes 'shall be confidential and produced only in response to a valid court order'." She then offered some weasel words about a councilman having the right of access of such minutes "within the scope of duties of the member." The "scope" of all council members' duties is any and all business to come before the governing body to which he/she was elected to serve. If the subject of the executive session did not fall within that purview, it cannot and should not be discussed in executive session.

The governor's wife went on to write that a request to review such minutes had to be made in writing with specificity. To justify her billing further, she went on to write that the City Clerk was to deliver these minutes to the City Attorney and that the City Attorney was to review the minutes, looking for material to redact because they would not be subject to review. Say, what? Every damned word of every page of minutes having to do with meetings of the city governing body must be made available to every member of that body - whether in the clique or not. Further, she opined, "the review will be supervised by the City Attorney or designee" and such member must sign a blood oath about the secrecy of the executive session minutes.

Korean Consulate donates to Wyoming's Korean War Memorial to be built in Cody



Photo by the Cheyenne Herald

Buck Wilkerson, Paul Ramirez (co-chairmen of the Korean War Memorial Committee, Republic of Korea Consular General Bon Woo Koo, and Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal - January 29, 2008.

Governor Dave Freudenthal looks on and applauds as Republic of Korea Consular General Bon Woo Koo presents a check to Paul Ramirez, co-chairman of the Wyoming Korean War Memorial Committee. The check is the first installment of a total donation of more than \$100,000 from the Korean Government.

In a presentation before a handful of Korean War veterans from both the United States and South Korea and others, both the Governor and Consular General commented on the cooperative effort demonstrated to complete this monument to the many Wyoming veterans who served with distinction during the Korean War.

The Wyoming Legislature allocated \$300,000 for the Memorial effort and additional funds will be raised through private and corporate donations. Engraved granite blocks will also be sold.



The Korean War took place from June 25, 1950, to July 27, 1953. Korea had been divided after World War II, when Japanese control ended. The northern part was occupied by Soviet troops until 1948 and the southern part by Americans until 1949. Efforts to reunify Korea failed, and the divided regions became independent countries. The Korean War began when communist North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950 and captured the capital Seoul. The United Nations Security Council voted to aid South Korea, and the United States led the peacekeeping forces. China and USSR supported North Korea. Although 20 other nations eventually became involved in the war, the Koreans saw it primarily as a civil war between the north and south. The armistice line north of the 38th parallel along the battle line ended the fighting, but Korea has remained divided into North Korea and South Korea for decades since. **Source: Encarta Encyclopedia**