

FRIVOLOUS ETHICS COMPLAINT DISMISSED FOR RELEASE MONDAY, JULY 2nd, 2018

An ethics complaint filed against Worth County Supervisor Merlin Bartz on June 26th by Mitchell County Supervisor candidate Al Winters has been dismissed. Mr. Winters filed three total ethics complaints; one against Bartz, and the other two against Mitchell County Attorney Mark Walk and Mitchell County Supervisor Stan Walk.

Worth County Attorney Jeff Greve's thorough review of the matter, summarized in a written response to Winters dated June 29th, outlines the Government Ethics and Lobbying Act provisions that would be applicable to Supervisor Bartz. Greve goes on to state that Bartz's public disclosure regarding a farm he had purchased and recorded recusals on votes as a North Central Iowa Regional Economic and Port Authority officer are what the law requires and that there is no violation.

"When you serve in public office as long as I have and express your views on things, you always know in the back of your mind that you are vulnerable to someone eventually filing a bogus ethics charge because they disagree with you on an issue," Bartz stated. "But it still caught me by surprise."

"I appreciate Mr. Greve handling this professionally and as expeditiously as possible and hope that Worth County taxpayers don't have to waste anymore tax dollars on investigating frivolous ethics complaints," Bartz added.

Greve also admonished Mr. Winters for "misstatement(s) of what has actually happened" and declined to refer the matter to another county attorney or order the suspension of a natural gas pipeline engineering study being paid for by Mitchell and Worth County after unanimous board approvals.

Mitchell County Attorney Walk stated that he viewed Winters' complaint against him as an attempt to "obtain free advertising in the newspaper" to "gain favor with voters."

"As a candidate for public office, Mr. Winters is advocating for more transparency. I believe that is a noble goal. But transparency is a two-way street. All the actions I have taken on behalf of Worth County or the Port Authority were taken in public on behalf of the public and are recorded public records. Given Mr. Winters agreeing with me regarding transparency, I request that he publicly post on his Facebook page Mr. Greve's letter, and a copy of this press release which I will make sure he has a copy of," Bartz concluded.

For further information, contact [REDACTED]