

Lake County Commissioners

Over the last 5 years, I have had the privilege and honor to get to know EM Director Keefer, and watch him grow and solidify the Emergency Management office and continue to support the dedicated volunteers involved in our local emergency response agencies.

The Emergency Management office must follow State guidelines, and as such, at times Director Keefer's hands are tied, as to the help, funding, or assistance he is able to provide to other agencies. With that being said, In the years I've known Mr. Keefer, I have never known him to turn his back on or not lend a hand or provide guidance or assistance to any department that has asked for help.

During this time, myself, members of the public, and our many Volunteer responders have been forced to sit back and watch Commissioner Reinicke systematically attack Director Keefer in what appears to be a personal vendetta. Most recently again in last Tuesday's Commission meeting.

Some examples:

Mrs. Reinicke questions Director Keefer's use of the EM / County Pickup. Although he is not being paid 24 hours a day, most people understand that this is a 24 hour/7 day a week job. I want to see the EM pickup out and about, it is refreshing to know, Director Keefer is on the job building better relationships.

Mrs. Reinicke then convinced the 911 Director that she needed to be included in the list of people that receive all the emergency response pages that go out in the county to our local responders. She is not a volunteer responder, and has no right to know the specific details of each call. There is no justification for this. Other people's misfortune is not for Mrs. Reinicke's entertainment. She immediately needs to be removed from the 911 notification system.

Mrs. Reinicke questions why Director Keefer is responding to emergency calls that occur within the county. It is his job. He is here to provide support, equipment, and additional resources when necessary. Mrs. Reinicke maliciously uses the County's active 911 software to track his location before, during and

after Emergency calls. Mrs. Reinicke then has the audacity to try and contact Director Keefer while he is working on or near an incident scene. This obviously is an attempt to dictate Director Keefer's actions, or to obtain some form of information about the incident, which is not public knowledge, and more than likely sensitive to begin with. This is not only senseless but extremely dangerous.

Next, Director Keefer is called to a large fire scene near Chester that involves several fire departments. Some of which are not from Lake County. In support of these departments, Director Keefer acquired food and drink for the responders. Again, Mrs. Reinicke questions why we are spending around \$200 for Volunteers that are not from Lake County. This money was actually LEPC funding which is intended to be used to support our 1st Responders. Why, because that is what we do, we support each other in any way we can. The businesses and people in the county have always been supportive of Local first responders, and have shown it through donations of money, goods, and services.

Next, Mrs. Reinicke verbally bashes Director Keefer at a Local Emergency Planning Commission meeting. This exchange was witnessed by other members of the committee. They were appalled. Thankfully, after pressure, she voluntarily stepped down from this Committee, and turned over supervision to another commissioner.

Most recently, we have had several severe tragedies in our county, one of which involved the death of a respected firefighter, Mr. Fedeler. It is my understanding that Director Keefer played a large part in organizing the services, and once again trying to bring our local fire departments together to pay respects to one of their own. Director Keefer was not being paid for attending the prayer service, nor the funeral. She now questions whether compensation for County employees to attend these services is appropriate.

Of course, it is appropriate. A few measly dollars to provide county representation, and respect a fallen comrade is the very least we can do. Most public safety agencies try to accommodate and support staff that wish to attend. This includes wage compensation, the use of emergency vehicles, and sometimes meals. The cost of these is minimal, to say the least.

After 20 years of an ongoing State political battle, the County Commission had a chance to finally vote in support of, allowing the staff of 911

Communications to be accepted into the Class B side of the State Retirement System. Most felt this would be an easy “yes” vote. The public does not realize the extreme stress and pressure our 911 operators are under. They faithfully work nights, weekends and every holiday and should not be considered differently from any other public safety department. Mrs. Reinicke again spoke up against this proposal, saying it would not be fair to the other employees. Once again, a slap in the face of public safety.

Mrs. Reinicke’s personal vendetta against EM Director Keefer has created a hostile work environment for him, and my advice would be for him to seek a competent attorney. Enough is enough. At some point the rest of the commission needs to step up, and stop Mrs. Reinicke from continuing her ongoing attacks. Lastly, in Roberts Rule of Order, silence is consent. As County Commissioners when someone acts out or speaks out to a level Commissioner Reinicke has done, and none of you openly oppose her, you are consenting to her agenda and behavior

I have a hard time understanding her reasoning, considering she comes from a family of well-respected Military Service Members & volunteer firefighters.

Public safety, as well as finding volunteers to staff local emergency services has been extremely challenging to say the least. How can we ever put a price on, or repay these First Responders that sacrifice work, family, and their own lives? With RESPECT.

Our own opinions. Thank you for your time.

David R Wegener

33 1/3-year Law Enforcement Veteran

Madison Police Department, Retired

Steve Engebretson

37 Years Retired Military

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