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DA — The Marshfield Mail - March 3, 2010

# Resident asks mayor to resign

## Gives board four-day deadline to act on request

By Linda Greer  
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Almost one year after he asked Marshfield aldermen to impeach Mayor C.R. "Bob" Clark, resident Steven Gullett asked Clark to resign Thursday, Feb. 25, for allowing city officials to be "serial offenders of citizens' civil rights."

The board took no action last year or upon Gullett's latest request.

Gullett, a Sioux medicine man and vice chairman of the Mayor's Committee on Human Rights, said Clark violated his civil rights by lying to him several times. City staff also broke the law by filling a Sunshine Law request for public records two years late, among other things, he said.

Saying that he is prepared to sue the city, Gullett challenged the board to impeach Clark now to save Marshfield "possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars" for legal defense costs and "potentially large judgment."

Gullett was listed on the Feb. 25 agenda to speak about three different redress

of grievance issues — comments made by Clark, Sunshine Law violations and term limits.

### Mayor's comments

Gullett said he came to the board because of a statement at the Feb. 11 board meeting when Clark said, "I am not a liar," to barber Harry Strenk regarding an alleged sign code violation.

As Gullett spoke, City Auditor Renee Lawson monitored the time with an electronic timer. City policy allows visitors to speak five minutes per topic if they are listed on the agenda.

Gullett said his redress of grievance concerned Clark's comment to Strenk about lying.

"So, the issue is, does the mayor lie? That is the question," Gullett said. "And, so ..."

"Excuse me, the question is about signs," Clark said, interrupting Gullett.

"Mayor, I'm speaking," Gullett said, going on to list incidents over the past year when he considered Clark's statements to be untrue.

Gullett said he also brought along some complaints from his children

from two years earlier regarding an alleged assault incident at their home. Gullett said a Marshfield police officer threatened the children.

"You said to me, Mayor, that if I brought you the complaints from these children, that you would reprimand that officer," Gullett said, adding that he gave Clark the written complaints in 2008.

Gullett said he made an open records request earlier in the week for proof the officer had been reprimanded. The response was that no document exists in city records.

"Did you not do it? If you didn't do it, then you lied to me," Gullett told Clark. "So, that's what I have to say, Mayor, that you are a liar."

When Clark attempted to speak, Gullett told him he was through talking about the issue and returned to his seat.

### Sunshine Law

Gullett said he came to challenge the board's abilities as city leaders. He asked the board what it will do

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about two Sunshine Law violations, one filled two years late.

“Will the rest of you impeach the mayor?” Gullett asked the board. “Do you want to do what is right, without having to be prosecuted?”

Gullett said he did not want an answer immediately. He said he expected an answer within four days or he would “proceed.”

After saying how much he loves Marshfield, Gullett was in the midst of telling the board how the city administration is “screwing it up” for him when the timer beeped to signal his speaking time was up.

“You need to straighten up and be the city leaders that we voted for you to be ...,” Gullett said as the timer beeped.

“Excuse me,” Clark said. “Your time is up.”

Clark asked if the board had any questions or comments. They did not. The board moved to the next agenda item – spring cleanup. Gullett spoke again later in the meeting.

**Term limits**

Gullett said many people have talked around town about bringing new ideas to the board. Three of the aldermen have served at least three terms. He said the board could impose term limits on itself.

“What would be a reasonable set of term limits to impose upon yourselves?” Gullett asked. “So, what would be so wrong about it, to let new ideas come in?”

Clark asked City Attorney David “Chuck” Replogle to explain the state statute regarding fourth-class city

boards.

The statute states that the mayor and aldermen are elected for two-year terms, and shall “hold office until their successors are elected and qualified,” Replogle said.

Replogle said the board does not have the authority to enact term limits.

Gullett said he talked to other attorneys who said the city could enact an ordinance to set term limits.

“Can we check into it a little deeper?” Gullett asked Replogle. “Can I get some other people to talk to you that are in this same field?”

“You can do whatever you want,” Replogle said. “The statute is the sole source of authority for this body to enact regulations pertaining to the term of office for mayor and aldermen.”

Alderman Jim Downing said he wanted to take Replogle’s word on the matter.

“He’s the one who keeps us out of trouble, and if he says we can’t do it ... If there is something that proves something different, then we’ll look at that,” Downing said.

Gullett asked if Replogle could study the matter.

Clark asked if the board wanted to vote to allow Gullett to spend time with the city attorney researching whether the board could impose term limits.

None of the aldermen made the motion.

“It remains status quo for a lack of a motion,” Clark said.

**Next meeting**

The Marshfield Board of Aldermen will meet at 6 p.m. Thursday, March 11, at City Hall. To be added to the agenda, call Clerk Terri Taylor at 468-6145.