



Sun Gazette
Gladstone, MO
Circ. 14244
From Page:
1
9/10/2009
14216



114-800
BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Riverside fires city attorney

By Michael Westblade

Riverside's Board of Aldermen voted 4-1 to fire John McClelland as the city's attorney, after returning to open session from a second closed session around 11 p.m. during its regular board meeting Aug. 18.

There was no ordinance to dismiss McClelland on

the city's agenda for the meeting or any indication the discussion would be had or a vote would be taken. According to Jean Maneke, a lawyer who specializes in media, publishing and entertainment law in Kansas City, this violates Missouri's Sunshine Law.

"A public body's agenda needs to list all items which it intends to discuss

at the meeting, so that the public can know what is going to come up before the board," she said. "The vote to fire the city attorney should have been listed on the agenda. If there was an emergency requiring that vote to be taken that night, the minutes should have reflected that an emergency

ATTORNEY/Page A5





Sun Gazette
 Gladstone, MO
 Circ. 14244
 From Page:
 5
 9/10/2009
 14216



ATTORNEY: Interim replacement hired

Continued from Page A1

existed and list the reason it was an emergency. Otherwise, it was a violation to discuss a topic and take a vote when the topic wasn't on the agenda for the meeting."

Specifically, Maneke said the city's dismissal of the attorney with no indication on the agenda violates section 610.020, subsection 1, of the Sunshine Law.

According to the city's minutes from the late-night open session, Ward 2 Alderman Bernie Bruns initiated the motion, seconded by Ward 2 Alderman Aaron Thatcher.

Bruns, Thatcher, Ward 1 Alderman Ron Super and Ward 3 Alderman David Hurt all voted in favor of the dismissal.

Thatcher, who voted in favor of the dismissal, said McClelland did nothing wrong and he was dismissed because the city

simply wants to move in a new direction.

"The decision was made more from the perspective of we felt at the time that we wanted to take a step forward and craft a new vision for the city," he said. "John did a lot of great things for the city, but it's time to move in a new direction."

Mike Fuller, Ward 1 alderman, was the sole no vote, and Ward 3 Alderman Brad Cope abstained from the vote altogether.

Fuller said he voted against the ordinance because he didn't think McClelland needed to be dismissed.

"I didn't have any reason to have him dismissed," he said. "I just voted no, and I'll leave it at that. They had their reasons, and I had mine, and that's all I can say about that."

Cope, on the other hand, didn't have an opinion on the matter.

"I just didn't have any

opinion either way, and that's kind of why I went in that direction," he said.

Kathy Rose, mayor of Riverside, declined to comment on the reasons for the dismissal, saying the decision was the board's to make.

After an apparent two-week gap without a city attorney, the board voted to hire R. Brian Hall as an interim city attorney at its regularly scheduled meeting Sept. 1. The board voted to hire Hall unanimously. However, the ordinance to hire Hall did not include stipulations for pay or the duration of his tenure.

Calls to McClelland's office at Armstrong and Teasdale and to Bruns were not returned.

Staff writer Michael Westblade can be reached at 389-6636 or michaelwestblade@npgco.com.