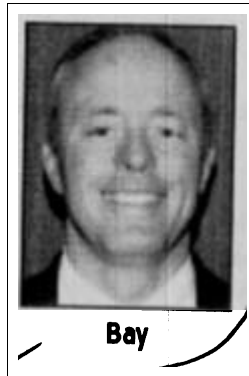


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Bay



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Alderman resigns, ethics complaint filed against City

JEANETTE BROWNING FAUBION
CITIZEN STAFF

The accusations flying around the City of Parkville may have overshadowed the actual City business conducted at the Board of Aldermen meeting Tuesday evening.

After months of off-and-on speculation on the residency status of

Alderman Jeffrey Bay, the Ward 3 alderman resigned Monday in a one-sentence letter sent to Mayor Gerry Richardson. The letter stated Bay would leave office April 30, but gave no reason for his res-

ignation. Richardson said Bay had not elaborated on his resignation and he was absent from the regular Board meeting with prior notice to the City clerk.

"I'm sorry Jeff couldn't be here

tonight so I could express to him my appreciation for his service," Richardson said.

The City's Web site lists Bay's residence as 6109 Vardon Drive, but allegations have been made since early last year that he had moved out of or sold the home. Kansas City's NBC affiliate, KSHB, followed the story for some time

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and has recently reported it filed a Sunshine Law request with the City requesting all documents related to Bay's residency.

NBC and CBS both had news crews present to film the Board meeting, primarily to capture a statement from Parkville business owner Tom Hutsler.

Hutsler, who as chair of the Parkville Olde Towne Community Improvement District was present to submit a financial report for the district, strayed from his scheduled topic after the report. He said he had called Parkville City Hall last Thursday to ask for

Bay's resignation. Bay's residency had come to his attention a year and one-half ago, he said.

Richardson said while Hutsler was free to discuss the subject, he asked that Hutsler wait until the next regular Board meeting so he could be added to the agenda.

"This topic may be of interest to other citizens, but if it's not on the public agenda the citizens have no notice of it," Richardson said, stating Hutsler could

_____ speak May 3.

"But I feel I would be remiss if I didn't come forward as a citizen to give my comment," Hutsler said.

_____ "You can, at the next meeting," Richardson insisted.

Hutsler, however, continued, and said he had today filed an ethics complaint with the Missouri Ethics Commission

_____ accusing Bay of moving out of Parkville before the April 2010 Board election.

Also present in her usual seat at the meeting was City Administrator Shannon Thompson, who was placed on administrative leave for three days last week due to an unspecified personnel issue. NBC,

_____ which has been investigating City expenses and finances for several months, has alleged Thompson was wrongly reimbursed for expenses during the course of her employment and speculated this could be related to the suspension.

Richardson, however, told *The Citizen* after the meeting that he felt the reimbursement errors the City had uncovered were due to a "perfectly legitimate misinterpretation of her contract." He said Thompson had repaid the City to the tune of about \$600.

Altogether, he was somewhat dismissive of NBC's allegations.

_____ "By what they've requested, I can speculate on what they're looking into and it's an extraordi-

_____ nary amount of investigation on an extraordinarily small amount of money," Richardson said. "We have found some errors, and when we have found those errors they have been corrected, but what we're talking about is a fraction of a fraction of the annual budget."

The City recently hired another Kansas City journalist, Heather Claybrook, to assist the City on a part-time basis with public relations matters. Richardson said the City had discussed making such a move every year for as long as he had been in office, but had sim-

_____ ply never pulled the trigger. Talks became more serious after the collapse of a retaining wall on Brink-Meyer Road a few years ago. This year, after Parkville residents' complaints about the closure of Highway 9 into downtown, Richardson said the need became more apparent, as "we clearly weren't doing the best job communicating."

_____ NBC has suggested the City hired Claybrook to help handle a coming scandal. Richardson said that was not the case; however when he receive an interview request from NBC he felt a session with Claybrook could help him prepare his thoughts because he had never experienced an on-air interview before.

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Richardson



Thompson