

## Joyce Raftery

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**From:** Brian Soukup  
**Sent:** Monday, August 21, 2017 12:27 PM  
**To:** Commissioners; Jane K. Shang; Joyce Raftery; skip@foflaw.com; Marsha SegalGeorge; John Masiarczyk; Sandi Jackson  
**Cc:** n13-desk@charter.com; newsmanager@clickorlando.com; wesh2news@gmail.com; cmetz@hearst.com; wofl\_web\_producers@foxtv.com; al@beacononlinenews.com; austin.fuller@news-jrnl.com; bsouk52@yahoo.com; markharper@news-jrnl.com  
**Subject:** My Resignation Letter

Below you will find my resignation letter please read it in to record tonight at the city commission meeting.

Thanks

Brian Soukup  
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386-837-9772

August 21, 2017

12:00 p.m.

To: Deltona Mayor and Commissioners  
City Manager Jane Shang  
City Clerk  
City Attorney

Cc: Members of the Media

RE: Resignation from Deltona City Commission effective immediately, August 21, 2017

Dear Mayor and Commission, City Manager, City Clerk, City Attorney:

This letter is long because I am not going to follow the Mayors rules that comments must be short and positive. I have words that need to be spoken.

It is with great sadness and disappointment but also with compelling conviction that I resign from my seat on the Deltona City Commission, effective immediately, August 21, 2017.

I am resigning not because of health reasons or work responsibilities or even to spend more time with my family, although I look forward to that. I am resigning on Principle and the compelling convictions of my personal and professional value system.

I was elected to serve in the public interest of Deltona citizens and to represent the citizens of District 5 in an ethical, honest and inclusive way. It has been one of the greatest honors of my life. My passion for public service is the same as when I was an athletic coach, to engage with and to inspire people to participate in making their community the best it can be and to empower them to be the best citizens they could be.

The recent actions of this commission, as well as the continued unprofessional actions of City Manager, Jane Shang, through the withholding and continuous misrepresentation and manipulating of critical information, have alienated me as an elected official and has essentially disenfranchised the people of my district. These actions which have been created and sanctioned by a majority of the commission, have essentially created an environment that steadfastly denies the free and full participation of at least some of the elected commissioners. Our citizens have been made to feel unwelcome and are often met with hostility and deliberate intimidation as they try to speak during public comment.

The actions and policies of which I refer specifically are:

1. The inability for an elected official to obtain public records without significant cost.

The City Manager picks and chooses what information is shared and does not share the same information with me as is shared with other commissioners - a practice that no professional manager would purposefully engage in and yet it is supported by this commission time and time again.

According to the city charter, the mayor and commissioners are created equal in their power, yet the manager treats Commissioners without equality, specifically those not part of the "Block."

2. The recent policy decision of not allowing commissioners, duly elected by their district voters, to place items on the agenda without prior majority approval from the Commission- which obviously has a majority "Block".

This action is chilling in that it has disenfranchised and silenced the voice of my district as has greatly marginalized and impacted my ability to carry out my duty and responsibility to my district.

This is unacceptable to me and I will not participate in a system that silences the voice of citizens or renders a duly elected official unable to represent the people they were elected to serve. We are after all a representative form of government.

I refuse to play politics on an uneven playing field with citizens' quality of life issues, especially when it comes to things like affordable drinking water and appropriate services for the 25,000 children in this community. I work for the people of this community - not special interest groups or consultants that want elected officials to be diminished to Rubber Stamps.

3. The recent Policy change of allowing ONLY positive and short comments during commissioner comment time. I do not believe that the comments of an elected official can legally be stifled, none the less, the mayor and a majority of the commission has chosen to go down that road. It will probably take a legal interpretation to stop this and I don't intend to file a complaint against my own peer group.

Our world and our community is filled with increasingly tough economic challenges and cultural and community problems in desperate need of discussion and creative problem solving.

Prohibiting the free speech of commissioners is not only unethical but stifles the very thing that we so desperately need in this community , Problem identification, open communication and creative problem solving.

4. This commission, not by accident, but by design, continues the unethical practice of making important decisions in workshops with a wink and a nod. This practice is not only unethical but may be illegal and is

confusing and disrespectful to citizens. It offers them little opportunity to understand or participate in their own government.

5. The mayor consistently violates his own meeting rules by picking and choosing when commissioners are permitted to speak to citizens during public comment. He frequently protects some commissioners from negative public comment while allowing other commissioners who are not part of the Block to be berated during the public comment time by people who are not even residents of this city. The manger allows her own employees to threaten and disrespect the commission during meetings.

6. And lastly, I cannot and will not continue to be complicit in sinking this community further into debt during uncertain economic times and a rapidly changing national government, without even the basic respect of discussing the issues and allowing citizens to participate in that process. City manager Shang often manipulates and misrepresents financial information that should be open and easily accessible not only to citizens but especially to elected officials in the performance of their duties.

The citizens have lost complete trust in this elected body as well as the top management of this city and yet we do nothing to correct that perception. Instead, we double down on the lies, the confusion, and the distortion of facts.

I promised my constituents when they elected me that I would watch over and care for this community and that I would always acknowledge and respect how we spent their hard earned money and that I would strive to earn their trust and their respect. Not only have you disrespected me in my role as a duly elected official, worse, you have and continue every day to disrespect the people of this city.

You search for ways to shut them out of any decision making processes that critically impacts their lives and their wellbeing. That is intolerable to me. Injustice and dishonesty in any form is intolerable to me and consciously doing it is indefensible. Yet this elected body, supported by City Manager Shang, chooses to ignore and cover up every misdeed that is committed and there are many.

I can no longer be part of an elected body that, in principal and in practice, continues to create and operate in a culture of injustice and unethical and possibly illegal practices. It is a culture that absolutely refuses to respect, to include and to serve in the best interest of its residents.

And worse, it is a culture that willingly condones and covers up unethical practices.

It is clear that Deltona is being run by special interests and highly paid consultants, concerned only with lining their own pockets.

I won't be complicit in that!

In choosing to resign by standing on principal, I hope that I am sending a message to our community, to other elected leaders and mostly to our 25,000 children in this community that a person does not have to go with the crowd when it violates one's own value system.

I hope they will find the character to stand tall, to keep their promises and to know that we can only solve the problems that we are willing to own. One does not have to become part of the gang and stand idly by watching bad things happen because they are outvoted or outnumbered.

In closing, I will continue to be committed to the betterment of this community and especially to our 25,000 children who so desperately need strong role models and community leaders with character. A community that has had to scratch its way out of the recession deserves a commission And a City Manager that they can believe in.

They should be able to go about their lives, raising their families and focusing on their jobs with the confidence that we are looking out for them. They should be able to read books with their children and not have to read minutes of commission meetings to see what we did to them.

But sadly, that is what they are forced to do.

I will contact the city clerk later today to inventory and return any items that belong to the city that were used in my role as commissioner .

In closing, I want to extend my appreciation to so many of the city staff that work hard every day to make our community a better place. I want them to know that they matter more than they know and that they are also appreciated by the community.

"The moment of gravest danger is when there is so little light that darkness becomes normal." - Neal Maxwell

Sincerely,

Brian Soukup

Sent from my iPad