



OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR MIKE RAGSDALE

October 16, 2006

400 Main Street, Suite 615, Knoxville, TN 37902

Commissioner Greg Lambert
P. O. Box 547
Powell, Tennessee 37849

Dear Commissioner Lambert:

During my tenure in office, I have made it my position not to respond to baseless rumors and lies.

Recently, however, four county commissioners sponsored a resolution calling for an investigation of Tyler Harber, a former Knox County employee, who was terminated over a year and a half ago. They are calling for an investigation based on false accusations printed in a community newspaper. I want to share facts with you.

While I have not read the articles, I have been told of the accusations and would like to respond:

- 1. Tyler Harber received pay and performed no work for Knox County.*
This is completely untrue. During his tenure at Knox County, Mr. Harber worked both in the Information Technology and the Pre-Trial and Probation Departments. Attached are sworn statements which address this issue from the department directors Dick Moran and Todd Cook. Mr. Moran and Mr. Cook are outstanding individuals with long and distinguished careers in public service. I have complete confidence in them.
- 2. Documents were taken from the Knox County Health Department regarding various individuals' health records.*
This is a complete lie and fabrication. Attached is a sworn statement from Mr. Mark Jones the department's director. Mr. Jones is a man of impeccable character and has served Knox County well for many years.
- 3. Mr. Harber stole Knox County Wheel Tax Petitions.*
I have no idea whether he did or not. The accusation that it was done at the direction of this office is patently false. The wheel tax petition was successful, and the voters approved the wheel tax.

Tyler Harber was given the option of being fired or resigning. His actions resulted first in a reprimand, followed by a three-day suspension and then his termination. This is the same process we follow with all employees.

Hindsight is a great view. Looking back, it was probably a disservice to Knox County and to Tyler to give him several opportunities to be a productive and responsible member of the organization. I take full responsibility for that decision.

From the beginning, I have stayed in contact with our Attorney General Randy Nichols and his Chief of Staff John Gill. We have openly discussed all incidents with them and have provided detailed information. These men have served our County with honesty, integrity and professionalism for many years. If any laws or ethical standards have been broken, they would take action and I would support them.

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Three of the four commissioners who have called for this investigation and "offered me the opportunity to clear my name" have never asked me a single question about the false accusations made in the weekly publication. Commissioners Scott Moore, Lumpy Lambert and Ivan Harmon have shared with me and members of my staff the real reasons for calling for an investigation of Tyler Harber. My staff and I will be glad to share their comments with you individually or at the County Commission meeting on October 23rd.

On October 11th, I met with Commissioner Mark Cawood. We discussed his concerns and he openly shared with me conversations he had with the other three commissioners. I am grateful for his candor and honesty.

I have put my heart and great effort into serving the citizens of Knox County. Like everyone else, I am far from perfect; I have made mistakes and will err in the future.

I have consistently promoted cooperation over conflict. However, a very, very few people in our community revel in petty political fights, lawsuits and spreading lies. Make no mistake about it; we can spend the next four years embroiled in slander and constant attacks that will keep us from achieving our potential. I have no interest in this distasteful behavior. I am committed to working with each commissioner to build on our recent successes, address the needs of your districts and professionally serve the citizens of Knox County.

Sincerely,



Mike Ragsdale
Mayor