

Kansas, Illinois

Kansas Village Board Member Resigns!

It has come to our attention that the clerk for the Kansas Village, Pam Shaffer, has costs the taxpayers of Kansas a small fortune. Although she did not resign over this failure, a lifelong Kansas resident and Village board member has.

The resignation letter outlines a loss of a minimum of \$20,000.00 from the Clerks failure to send out bills for the ambulance, the actual dollar figure may be closer to \$60-75,000.00 over a 5 year period.

She still has her job as she is an elected official and even though many consider this Official Misconduct, the Village board chose to basically do nothing to pursue the recovery of these funds or take any type of action against the Village Clerk, other than a letter in her file?

A FOIA request might prove this quite interesting. More disturbing in this situation is what appears to be a common theme in Edgar County.

Note that in Mr. Marrs resignation letter he states the following: "When I made suggestions of ways to improve the oversight of the revenue and expenditures of the village I was told we don't want to micro-manage."

So the Village Board of Kansas doesn't want to micro manage? Sounds like words out of certain County Board members. Is this failure to establish proper oversight within our local governments an infection that has now taken hold in our country? Many would argue yes, and it's found in both parties so those that want to turn this into a left vs right debate might as well forget it, because both sides are doing it.

We must fix it! If the Village of Kansas would have had proper

oversight in their local revenue and expenditure this loss to the community would have never happen. In this case it wouldn't have taken much more than reading the report from the CPA who did the audit. Apparently concerns of no revenue from the ambulance was reported yet in order to know that someone might have had to read the report.

If the County board would have had proper oversight over their department's maybe we wouldn't have the issues we now have with the 911 board and the Health Department.

How many other departments have financial issues? Once you start peeling the onion back it just stinks more and more! I do have to say it's very refreshing to read Mr. Marrs resignation letter because it reflects exactly how a large percentage of the people feel.

It's also a huge encouragement to know there are still people who care and try to do the right thing, even though it may not be popular. I encourage everyone to read Mr. Marrs letter and see for yourself how things are being handled within local government in our county.

Then ask yourself, is this stuff happening in my town? Maybe you should start attending the meetings and find out for yourself!

Susan Saxton,

06-01-11

Mayor Village of Kansas, IL

After much thought and prayer I have come to the conclusion that my time and effort could be better spent on endeavors where I can see positive outcomes and where there is an atmosphere of wanting to see improvements made. I have been on the village board for 1 year now and have witnessed very little in the way of anything of any substance that will help our village grow and improve itself. In fact I have witnessed the opposite.

When I served on the board in the 90's there was a much different atmosphere with the board. Though we didn't always agree we all worked hard to help improve our community. We set aside money each year to repair or replace sidewalks (even though it cost too much money). We made major changes in our police department; replacing the chief, getting down to only one part time deputy, buying them their first computer, purchasing a new car, changing uniforms.

All this was done to change our negative image and to provide better service to our residents. An active role was also taken by board members in regards to overseeing the operations of the police department on all levels. The board worked very hard to improve the relationship between the board and the ambulance personnel. We wanted to show them that we appreciated them and the service they provided to the community.

We purchased a new ambulance to replace the outdated troubled ambulance that a previous administration had strapped them with in an attempt to save a dollar. We fixed their office up and got them an air conditioner so they could be comfortable during meetings and training. I even attended their meetings so I could hear first-hand from them about what they were facing and how we could help them better provide services to our citizens.

The board started the grant process, that eventually lead to the new water treatment facility which then lead to improved water quality for all residents. We spent a considerable amount of money to run water lines and install a hydrant for a resident who was planning to build new houses in a hope to bring new people to town.

Even though this didn't pan out, the effort was made by the board to do what they could to not only help this businessman but also try and help our village grow and improve.

For several years now the status quo has been to do little to actually help the village grow. In fact when a resident came to the board wanting to add a business they were not encouraged or helped in any way by the present board when they should have been met with open arms and a can do attitude.

In another incident a businessman came to the board to inform them of his plan to bring people to town for a day and when I asked the board if we could help him the mood was one of negativity. We can't do that. We can't help a business who brought over fifty people to the town for the day many of whom spent money while they were here helping out more than one business.

I think the final straw was the ambulance billing debacle. When bills had not been faxed in for five years at a loss of a minimum of \$20,000.00 dollars the feeling I got was that the administration wanted to cover it over. I cannot and will not be part of that. There was a major neglect of duty and there should have been appropriate consequences levied.

The treatment of Holly and me by the mayor in our executive session was uncalled for and totally inappropriate. We both were treated with disrespect and made to feel that we had done something wrong because we were willing to stand up for what was right and not afraid to speak up about it.

When I made suggestions of ways to improve the oversight of the revenue and expenditures of the village I was told we don't want to micro-manage. Possibly had there been more involvement by the board the situation with the ambulance billing could have been caught and rectified before all the money was lost and the taxpayers money had to be used to fund the ambulance instead of the people who used it.

Even my efforts to try and make the board legal in regards to OMA, and FOIA was met with negativity by some board members.

I thus tender my resignation from the Kansas Village Board effective immediately. I will also inform the Attorney General's office that I am no longer the FOIA officer for the Kansas Village Board.

Sincerely,

Danny W. Marrs