

Dear Lake County residents,

My name is Michele Bauman. I was elected Avon Township Supervisor in April of 2021 following a bitter election campaign against former Avon Township supervisor and current Lake County Board Member Terry Wilke.

When I beat Mr. Wilke in the Avon Township Supervisor race by a 72-to-28-percent margin, I vowed to put him in the rearview mirror and focus on the future of Avon Township. Unfortunately, Mr. Wilke hasn't done the same thing. Instead, he celebrates and lies about a campaign supporter who sexually harassed me after the election.

Before I further delve into this appalling display by Mr. Wilke, I want it clear I did not want to be in this position. However, I have reached the point where I need to let the proverbial "cat out of the bag" and discuss this issue with the members of the Lake County Board and its residents.

While I was knocking on doors during my Avon Township Supervisor campaign in February of 2021, I inadvertently knocked on the door of one of the relatives of Mr. Wilke's running mates without my knowledge. A person inside the home answered the door, but politely said she wasn't interested in communicating with me. I turned to leave and walked down the driveway, but I was called into a conversation with a man in his truck who turned out to be a relative of the running mate inside the house. He also turned out to be a close acquaintance of Terry Wilke.

At this point, it's important to note I will not be releasing the name of this person. I WANT to release his name, but after speaking with attorneys, consultants, professionals and various friends, I have chosen to keep his name silent for now because it remains unknown if charges will be filed against this person. I hope it will happen, but I fear politics are playing a role in this whole thing.

Shortly after that meeting outside that home, Mr. Wilke's supporter started texting me through Facebook messenger. We began conversing cordially, centering around things taking place in the township and his volunteer work at the Avon Cares food pantry. These conversations lasted a couple of months, during which time I won my election and was seated as Avon Township Supervisor.

After I was seated as supervisor, this supporter would text me and have normal conversations with me – he would discuss his family, his work and how he volunteered for Mr. Wilke at the Avon Cares Food Pantry. Every now and then, this supporter would try and give me a compliment that made me feel uncomfortable. When this happened, I wouldn't respond, I would say it's time for me to go or I would change the subject back to township business.

This happened until the end of June when this Wilke supporter suddenly started acting aggressive. He said in a text, "I want (<sp> won't) let you hurt him" regarding Mr. Wilke. He then said he would give me private information about Mr. Wilke, but that "its going to cost you... Not just money sex too."

I immediately ended these conversations with him. But, for over a month, this campaign supporter sent me text after text where he repeatedly brought up this "deal." He would say things like "Got some info but you willing to get it" and "its going to cost you." He would also call me, "beautiful," he said "Its up to you all you have to do is me are you good with that." It was repulsive.

Let's make this perfectly clear: this Wilke campaign supporter was offering through text messages to give me information on Mr. Wilke in exchange for sex and money. I understand this may be hard to

believe, but I have attached these messages at the end of this email for anyone to read. I have redacted his name and removed all phone numbers to conceal his identity.

I was stunned, aghast and disgusted at the way this man behaved. I couldn't believe I was being sexually harassed by this person.

As you will see in the text messages attached, I only responded once after he made this offer. That one time was for clarification regarding something he said because I wanted his request to be clear when I went to the police. Despite not speaking to him, he sent dozens and dozens of messages to me saying "let me know you for sure out of good faith put some money under the wipper <sp wiper> on your car and when you get off work we can meet up for the rest of the payment." The rest of the payment he was alluding to was sex.

As this person continued sending gross texts to me over and over – as he said things like "take 1 for the team" and that "your husband (want) wont know unless you tell him this a one time," I showed several friends these texts and we were all disgusted – not just by what he was saying, but also by the continued onslaught of these texts being sent me. I was the Supervisor of Avon Township, but this person kept sending me these gross offers over and over and over.

In July I had enough and I sent copies of these text messages to an investigator I previously worked with inside the Lake County State's Attorney's Office. He sent them to an officer at the Round Lake Park police department. The police officer opened an investigation and I turned over approximately 100 text messages to him. Officers performed a forensic audit on my phone to capture every single message and phone call that was exchanged. As you can read in the police report I have attached to this statement, it proved I never returned or answered these calls after the initial "sex deal" he pitched.

In addition, inside the police report you will read the person who harassed me told police he wanted \$1,000 in exchange for information about Terry Wilke. However, you will read in the text messages I enclosed that he wanted both sex and money.

I obtained an order of protection against this person on the advice of counsel. This resulted in my entire story being laid out for a judge to review. The 19th Judicial Circuit Judge granted my request for the order of protection due to the overwhelming amount of evidence against my sexual harasser. The stalker – who still volunteered at the Avon Cares Food Pantry where Wilke serves as "president" – didn't even contest the order of protection due to the overwhelming evidence against him. The judge ordered my stalker to stay at least 500 feet from me and not contact me in any way.

The proof of this story remains in the order of protection which was previously marked confidential by the Lake County Circuit Clerks Office. This was done to protect me due to the ongoing police investigation. I have also attached these confidential reports to the end of this statement. As I said, I have nothing to hide.

I hoped that filing this order of protection would end this problem. Unfortunately, that's when the real travesty started as Lake County Board Member Terry Wilke decided to get involved.

Mr. Wilke learned about this order of protection I obtained against this campaign supporter and wrote a statement on a website he owns at avontownship.com stating:

Update August 2021: Michele Bauman gets an order of protection... it looks like she tried to bribe a volunteer into giving her information on the former supervisor in exchange for sex and/or money. GROSS!!

The proof that Mr. Wilke owns the website is attached in this statement. In addition, I attached a picture of this absurd statement on that website at avontownship.com to this report, and this statement is also visible inside the attached police report.

This absurd, disgusting statement where Terry Wilke immediately discredits me as a victim of sexual harassment then victim shames me remains on this website he owns at avontownship.com from August 2021 through today.

Now, Mr. Wilke may try and contest the ownership of this website, but I said, I have attached the website ownership documents to this email, along with a snapshot of what Mr. Wilke wrote. To be clear, Mr. Wilke purchased this website domain on Feb. 3, 2021 and named himself the contact for registrant, technical, administrative and billing.

This intentionally false statement about how I tried to exchange sex and/or money to bribe one of his campaign supporters remains on a website owned by Lake County Board member Terry Wilke despite Mr. Wilke knowing these claims are false. And, as far as I can tell, Mr. Wilke is intentionally doing this because he is attempting to victim shame me as revenge for beating him in the 2021 election.

I'm coming out now with this information because every day I am re-victimized and shamed when people read the lies Terry Wilke posted about me. I have people contacting me constantly to determine if it's true that I used sex and money to try and obtain information against Mr. Wilke. I am routinely forced to defend myself from these fictitious accusations by Mr. Wilke. Some people believe me, some don't. To make it worse, it's unknown how many people go to that website, but I'm sure the damage is worse than I'm mentioning. These statements are clearly written on avontownship.com, which I'm sure are often confused by our township website at www.avonil.us.

I have been shamed. I have been humiliated, and it's all because Terry Wilke chooses to victim-shame me. But, I'm done. I'm done letting Mr. Wilke continue to spread these lies after one of his campaign supporters sexually harassed me.

I have been waiting for the Lake County States Attorney's Office to act on charges against this offender, but I wait, and wait and wait. I have contacted an attorney to file a defamation of character lawsuit against Mr. Wilke, but it will cost me thousands of dollars and hours of time to get these lies scrubbed from his website. Why should I have to pay the thousands to fix the truth just because one man is trying to victim-shame me?

I am tired of defending myself when I did nothing wrong.

When someone is elected to a government job like Mr. Wilke is, they should be held to a higher standard as an elected official. They should never be given a pass for negative behavior. Mr. Wilke did not receive a pass when he had named an Avon Township colleague of mine during the 2020 election and I was proud the Lake County Democrats denounced Mr. Wilke for what he did. He should be denounced again, this time for victim-shaming a woman who was clearly sexually harassed.

I am hopeful the Lake County Board will no longer give Mr. Wilke a platform to demonstrate his abusive behavior.

I am formally requesting the Lake County Board remove Terry Wilke from office. There is no excuse for this behavior, and he is unable to justify his behavior as acceptable. In addition, it's time to support, start a dialogue and get help to victims of sexual harassment, sexual abuse and victim shaming.

It's time for accountability. It's time for the Lake County Board to rise up against Terry Wilke and say in one united voice that what he has done is wrong. It's time for the leadership on the Lake County Board to say they will not tolerate Mr. Wilke's revolting victim shaming behavior.

To people going through similar situations and are looking for help, please reach out to A Safe Place at asafeplaceforhelp.org or via phone at (800) 600-SAFE.

I wish you all the best,

Michele Bauman

Avon Township Supervisor