
Big Bend trustee Goodman may face recall

Petition alleges failure to act in residents' best interests; he calls it unfounded

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BIG BEND — Village Board Trustee Jeff Good-

man may face a recall election in the coming months after a village resident submitted a petition requesting his removal, according to a document obtained by an

open records request.

The recall petition, submitted by village resident Harry Rauworth, states Goodman is being recalled for alleged “failure to look out for the best interest of the residents of Big Bend and entering into negotiations contrary to Village Ordinances.”

Rauworth told a Freeman reporter that his petition is

the result of Goodman negotiating a fire and emergency medical services contract with the Town of Vernon, asserting that Goodman entered negotiations without Village President James Soneberg or Clerk/Treasurer Brad Calder.

“The only person that can make negotiations is the village president,” Rauworth said. “Goodman is also

working to get rid of the police department as well as the library. He’s trying to do away with everything in Big Bend.”

Rauworth, with the help of former Trustees Dave Treichel and Leah Fickau as well as Soneberg’s mother, has gathered 207 signatures since the petition was first circulated on July 11.

For a recall, the petitioner

needs 25 percent of the total number of voters in the last election, said Calder. In this case, Rauworth needed 165.

However, Goodman has since challenged the recall petition, calling it unfounded and lacking substantial evidence.

“They don’t have any grounds, it’s just harass-

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Recall

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ment by the people that lost their seat," Goodman said. "And they were voted out by a large margin. It wasn't just a couple votes."

Goodman said he's never suggested that he would eliminate any departments, but rather he's following his due diligence as a trustee by eval-

uating the financial state of the village to reduce taxes.

"I do have the best interest because I really don't want to eliminate any departments," Goodman said. "I just want to look at all the departments and I think I'm looking out for the best interest of Big Bend. That's what people elected me to do."

Goodman included the minutes of each meeting he attended where the fire con-

tract was discussed as a portion of his rebuttal, which show Soneberg and Calder attended every one.

"Every negotiation or communication I had, James was in on," Goodman said.

Soneberg did not sign the petition, though he supports the process because citizens have the right, he said.

"I think what sparked all of this was the Fire Department," Soneberg said. "The

thought of getting rid of the fire department a struck a nerve in the community. This is the community's way of communicating to the Village Board."

Recall process

The reason behind a recall can be a matter of opinion, but it must be related to the duties of the public official being recalled, said Reid Magney, public information

officer for the Wisconsin Election Commission.

Even though negotiations did not occur without the president and the clerk, the recall process would still proceed so long as the petition is deemed "sufficient" by Calder. Calder's decision is not to determine whether the petition is based on facts, but rather to ensure that the signatures are valid, and the process has been followed

appropriately.

Goodman and Rauworth could appeal Calder's certification of sufficiency, at which point the case would be reviewed by the Wisconsin Election Commission.

The recall election is held on the Tuesday of the sixth week after the date on which the certificate of sufficiency is filed, according to the Wisconsin Recall of Elected Local Officials Manual.