



District of Wells

Hello Colleagues, Staff and Wells constituents:

It is with a heavy heart that I am formally resigning as Mayor, effectively immediately. My resignation will cause some people to be happy, and some to be frustrated, but it comes with a detailed letter of explanation.

When I decided to run for Mayor, my interest was to be a voice for our town, I wanted to make a difference, bridge gaps, pull people together, promote and encourage diversity, enrich the arts, tourism, and industry, be a leader and provide different viewpoints and ideas.

To work with our partners in all sectors, and to see Wells grow and flourish in a positive way, and help Wells to become a model to which other small rural municipalities look up to.

We need all the pillars, that are our foundation to accomplish this.

I still want all of those things, and more, but due to recent events, and with the letters written into council, that stated that I was in a "perceived conflict of interest" have caused a ripple effect that has stripped my ability to do my job effectively as the Mayor.

Whether or not you like the fact that BGM/ODV are here, they are a major part of this town, now, and in the future, and it is important to have the elected officials be apart of the decision-making process, as they are elected to do.

If I cannot be a voice on that, then I must resign.

Those letters have left me feeling that my integrity is in question.

The only thing that makes any sense to me, is that those who wrote those letters feel that I would not act in the best interest of the community due to me working for the mine, and that is simply not the case in any way shape or form!

In my defence on these letters, I have said, since the beginning that I would make choices, give opinions, and act in the best interest for the community as a "whole", and not just what is the in the best interest for the mine, or in the best interest of a particular group, nor what is in the best interest for me, and me working for the mine as an equipment operator doesn't change that.

I haven't said or done anything to put that in question, in fact, I have done my utmost to try and achieve what I set out to do, and act in the best interest for the community, as a "whole".

It makes me angry that a few letters has taken away the voice of the community members that voted for me to act in the best interest for the town.

I feel sad for the community members that did their due process by way of democracy, voted, and now don't have their voice that they voted for.

Had those letters not been written, I would still be doing my job as Mayor, I would still be apart of making the decisions that will, without a doubt, for the most part, be of benefit to our town and the community members that reside within it.

These are extremely important times, with equally important decisions, and I don't have the opportunity to be a voice on it anymore.

The elected officials need to have a voice about the mine in our town, and the trickle-down effect that it has on many town dealings, eg... the potential of a new school, the repairs on the Community Facility Building, the OCP, an MOU agreement, help on our infrastructure, the environment, etc etc...

The BGM/ODV has, and is currently assisting in our town right now, they've done good things, offered good things, and are helping where they can.

Without my voice at the table, I can't do my job properly, and then the many taxpayers that voted for me would have been paying for an individual that cannot act in their best interest anymore, this is not fair to a large number of the community that voted for me, and I can't, in good faith, collect my cheque, knowing I can't do my job properly.

This has left me with a choice of either continuing to work for the mine, and not being able to do my job as Mayor, or, quitting work for the mine, and then fulfilling my duties as the Mayor, while then struggling financially.

I have to choose my well being and livelihood as number one.

I have bills to pay, food to eat, etc etc, and unfortunately, the elected official salary doesn't even come remotely close to making enough to live, this is why, customarily elected officials need supplemental incomes, with not many choices of where to work in a small town.

Tell me, "how does an elected official work in a small town" and not be in a "potential conflict" in some way or another?!?

I could understand a "direct conflict" in certain situations, however not just from a simple job.

This is a broken system.

It is important to note that I would have loved to continue to be the Mayor of Wells, and continue to give my time for this community, all with next to little compensation.

I am truly passionate about the well being of this town, and the people that reside within it, and it saddens me to not be able to do that anymore.

Being an elected official comes with heavy stress, it's financially limiting, and takes a toll on an individual in ways that is hard to describe.

It is mentally, and emotionally draining, and exhausting, and those can also cause physical ailments while effected by those.

It is very rewarding in many ways, and it is very difficult in others.

Those things are known going into it, however, what makes up for those hindrances is the luxury of trying to make good decisions to feel good about, and hopefully pave a better way for your community, and without having that luxury, it is hard to be an elected official when you have nothing to look forward to be able to achieve.

This has left me feeling like I'm not the same person, and certainly I'm not treated the same way as I used to be by certain members of the community.

The person I used to be has been pushed aside by the elected official.

Some will say that I should have known things would change when you're elected, and yes, things do change when elected, however I do not believe that an individual that runs to be elected, with the desire to do the best they can for the community, for which is "basically a volunteer job" should be and feel ostracized in their community.

Politics is a weird thing, as we all don't always agree with certain situations, views, or stand points, so some tend to gravitate towards dislike for an individual, instead of still respecting them, even when not agreeing with a topic or course of action.

I'm not saying that everyone acts this way, however, some people in this town, "when things don't go their way" excel at treating elected officials and staff very poorly (in my opinion), I have watched this happen for years since the day of incorporation.

How many staff and elected officials have we lost over the years, and this has mainly been due to the abuse they have received for trying to do good work that some people don't always like or agree with. Respect is the key.

The elected colleagues, the staff, and the residents may all have different views and opinions on these matters from myself, and I respect them, whether I agree with them or not, but these are my views and my opinions, and I only speak on my behalf.

I have been 100% transparent and completely candid.

I implore the residents who have verbally spoken to me in support of council, staff, and town proceedings, to write those letters of support.

It's time for people that are happy to start stepping up, writing and speaking more support, it's hard to always be told what you're "supposedly" doing wrong by some people.

Nobody is perfect, mistakes will happen, and people can't learn without making mistakes, but it's important to also see the good things that are done and more importantly, recognize those achievements.

Staff and officials need some positivity.

They need to off set the letters of complaints we have received, that show some lack of support, with some positive points to grab onto and use as fuel to continue on and gravitate from.

Without any support from people, it is hard to go day to day bearing the heavy load that DOW staff and the elected officials have to carry.

A little goes a long way!

Customarily people that are happy stay silent and don't write letters stating to us their support for the public record, but those who are unhappy do write stating their unhappiness, and that needs to change...

Silence is not support.

The staff and the elected officials, have, and continue to do the best they can with the information they have received.

For the people that act or speak out of place, spread the misinformation and the rumours, you don't have all the pieces to the puzzle, as you are not elected.

Those mentioned actions makes the job harder for the staff and officials, as they have to now spend their time and energy combating them, instead of using their time and energy to do the good things.

It is important to realize that people need to have faith in the elected officials and the staff to do their job to the best of their ability, with the information they have, and share that information and decisions when they can in the name of transparency.

It is also important for the constituents to be able to voice their ideas, opinions, concerns, support and questions, but it is not ok for them to attempt to micromanage the staff or the elected officials, or speak about things that they don't have all the facts about.

I would like to thank our staff, and all of the colleagues I've had the pleasure to work with, thank you for all your hard work!

I've enjoyed learning and growing in our rolls with you all, and making those hard but needed decisions, as well as seeing some things come to fruition.

Hopefully you'll receive some well-earned support for the good things you do and have done!

I also want to thank the community members that voted for me to represent Wells as the Mayor, you've given me knowledge, and the opportunity to serve my community.

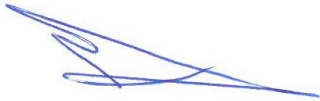
I would also like to thank all the committee members, all of you hard work your volunteer hours are not always seen or appreciated, but I definitely did see and appreciate you.

On closing, it may seem like I'm sour over the situation, and in some ways, I am, but for the most part I was happy in my role. The things I've stated needed to be said.

I would like to reiterate, for the most part, it was a pleasure and an honour being the Mayor of Wells, it made me proud to serve my community, and be apart of some good things that are, and will happen over the years here.

I remain passionate about our town, and the residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gabe Fourchalk', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gabe Fourchalk