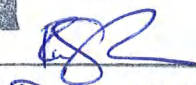


11/20/2019

Attn: Mr. Ron Shaver  
Olathe City Attorney  
100 E. Santa Fe Street  
Olathe KS 66061  
913-971-8938  
rshaver@olatheks.org

**RECEIVED**  
NOV 21 2019  
BY:   
RONALD R. SHAVER  
CITY ATTORNEY 10:45 AM

**RECEIVED**  
NOV 21 2019  
CITY OF OLATHE  
CITY CLERK OFFICE

10:43 AM



Re: Karin Brownlee Ethics Violation per Olathe Resolution No. 93-1122

My name is Brett Hoedl. I'm a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Olathean, husband, and father of 5, that has been advocating before the Olathe Human Relations Commission and the Olathe City Council for the past 3 years to get laws changed to protect the LGBTQ community for discrimination. I am the Chair of Equality Kansas of Metro KC and the father of a 14-year-old gay son.

I am submitting this as a formal complaint per Olathe Resolution No. 93-1122 that Councilor Karin Brownlee has violated the Olathe Code of Ethics, that she has violated the trust the Olathe citizens have placed in her to duly execute her duties, and that Karin Brownlee needs to resign from the Olathe City Council or the City Council needs to vote on her removal.

I worked for well over a year within the OHRC to get a full Non-Discrimination Ordinance that protects the LGBTQ community recommended to the Olathe City Council. Since the first Olathe City Council Meeting in January of 2019, I've been showing up to almost every Olathe City Council meeting asking the Council to pass the Non-Discrimination Ordinance that their own Human Relations Commission recommended. I advocate for myself, for my kids, for my neighbors, and for the entire LGBTQ community within Kansas.

I don't advocate for my employer. I never have, and I've never indicated that I'm speaking on behalf of my employer at any City Council meetings, nor in any emails I've sent to the City Council. My advocacy has always been predicated on the fact that I'm advocating for Olathe citizens and my son.

I was shocked and dismayed to be pulled out of a work meeting on 11/14/2019 at 11:53am by the Associate Vice President of State & Local Government Affairs "AVP" at my employer. The AVP wanted to inform me that he was contacted by Councilor Karin Brownlee at an event where he was representing my employer. Karin brought up to him that I was advocating at city hall under my employer's name, and she complained to him that I was acting inappropriately to the council. My AVP was concerned and wanted to hear "my side of the story". I indicated that I have never claimed to advocate under my employer's name and that I believe I have behaved in a professional manner.

This isn't the first time I've discussed my advocacy with my employer. I reached out to the AVP when I first started working at my employer because I know that my push for LGBTQ rights may put me in the news. I had previously also asked if my employer would provide statements of support to local municipalities that were considering non-discrimination ordinances that protected the LGBTQ community. My employer was fully supportive of my advocacy work and they have been extremely supportive of the LGBTQ community within the company, but they indicated that their policy is not to weigh in on local municipal matters. They have a State/Fed policy, but it would be difficult for a global organization to weigh in on city and county laws across the world. This is the same response I received from pretty much every other major local corporation within Johnson County, KS. I am acutely aware that my employer doesn't want me advocating on their behalf at a local municipality. My employer also does a tremendous amount of work for the City of Olathe and I did not want there to be a line crossed where I was appearing to interfere with actual projects/business that my employer does with the City of Olathe.

To have my employer confronted by City Councilor, Karin Brownlee, put my entire advocacy in question. Whether my employer acted on the information Karin Brownlee shared or not, it sent a chill down my spine. My employer was concerned enough about her comments to get me out of a meeting to discuss them. My employer informed me that they were not instructing me to cease and desist my advocacy and

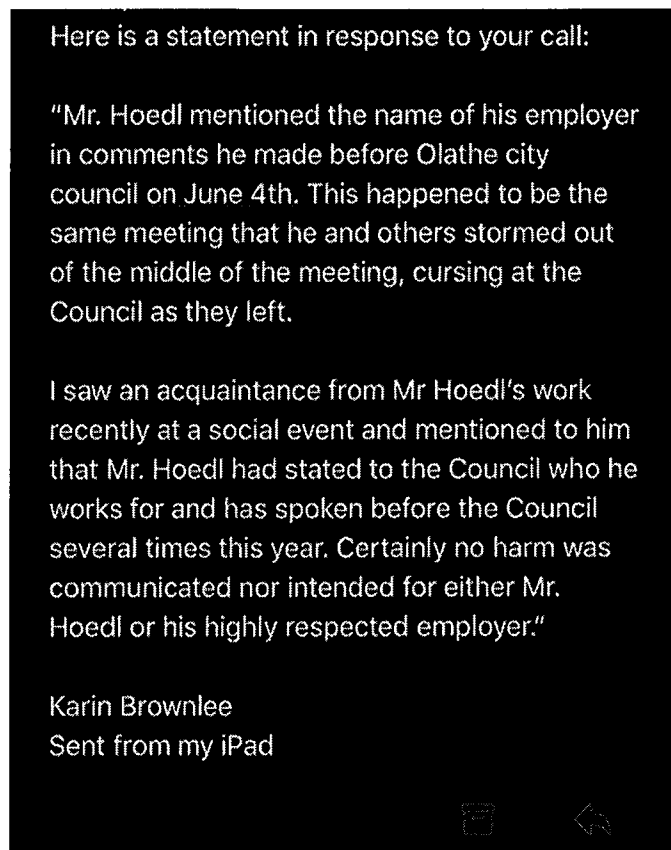
11/20/2019

that I have the right to continue to speak up. I am a lucky one to have a supportive employer. There is no doubt in my mind that others may not be so lucky.

This was not a casual conversation with an acquaintance at an event. This was Olathe City Councilor, Karin Brownlee, contacting Associate Vice President of State & Local Government Affairs at my employer and saying that I'm using my employer's name and acting inappropriately before the Olathe City Council. There is no situation where that would be considered ethical. There is no way that anyone on this council can view that action as anything other than an attempt to silence someone that is advocating for a position that she doesn't support. You don't contact the employer of a citizen and complain about them and not expect something to happen in return.

Karin knows this. Karin has been in public elected office for over 20+ years with a brief stint working as the Kansas Secretary of Labor. Karin's current career is lobbying for a number of organizations in Topeka, advocating for issues at the Kansas State Capital. There is no possible way that this was an innocent indiscretion. It's been her job for the past 20+ years to understand and be an expert in ethical government practices.

Karin Brownlee does not deny that this happened. She is downplaying her actions, but the image below is her response to the Kansas City Star that it happened and that she had complaints about me.



Karin also gave the following statement to the Kansas City Star on 11/19/2019:

<https://www.kansascity.com/opinion/editorials/article237570149.html>:



*"Brownlee, a former state senator and Kansas secretary of labor under Gov. Sam Brownback, said after the meeting that she had run into Hoedl's colleague socially and had just casually mentioned that he'd "named his employer" in a statement to the City Council on June 4.*

*So, she wasn't trying to get him fired? "Absolutely not," she said. "I could say more," she added."*

"I could say more," what could that possibly mean?

There is no way that anyone can trust that Karin Brownlee is not using her public office to intimidate or harm Olathe citizens that are using their first amendment right to petition their government.

Karin Brownlee has violated numerous aspects of the Olathe Code of Ethics under Resolution No. 98-1068.

"SECTION ONE: The Code of Ethics for the City of Olathe shall read as follows:

#### CODE OF ETHICS

Officials and employees of the City of Olathe shall:

A. *Be dedicated to the ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships.*

***Karin has attacked a private citizen at his employer for advocating issues that are before the council. This is a clear violation of the ideals of honor and integrity.***

B. *Conduct themselves so as to maintain public confidence in the performance of their job duties.*

***No members of the public should trust that Karin will not use her position to harm and attack them for speaking at council meetings.***

D. *Seek no favors, use the prestige of office for private gain, nor use confidential information or government equipment or supplies to secure a profit or enhance wealth.*

***Karin used her position of power for private gain to attempt to silence a citizen that works at a company that she directly votes on their contracts from advocating for LGBTQ issues.***

G. *Address constituents concerns and needs, striving to provide the highest level of service with equity, neither granting special favor nor discriminating against any citizen.*

***Karin Brownlee is an At-Large councilmember in Olathe that is supposed to represent all Olatheans. She has used her position to attack her own constituent because she didn't like what that citizen was saying. Karin's actions have a chilling effect on Olathe residents feeling comfortable voicing any concerns before the Olathe government.***

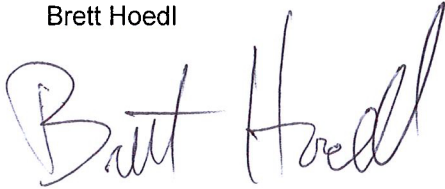
Karin Brownlee has lost the trust of the public and either needs to resign or be voted out of office by the Olathe Governing body. If Karin remains on the council, then the public will lose all faith in the Olathe City Council and will no longer feel safe speaking up at Olathe City Council meetings or in private discussion with the governing body. We cannot allow this abuse of power and completely unethical behavior to stand. Please act swiftly so the Olathe Governing body can start to regain the trust and respect from residents that feel completely violated.

11/20/2019

If you need specific details of names and dates, please let me know ASAP and I will provide them. I am afraid to share too much information for fear that this has already cost myself and my employer way more stress and national attention that was completely unnecessary.

Respectfully,

Brett Hoedl

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett Hoedl". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'B' and a long, sweeping 'H'.

17446 W 161<sup>st</sup> St  
Olathe, KS 66062  
913-235-3139  
bhoedl@gmail.com

Acknowledgment of Individual

STATE OF KANSAS

COUNTY OF JOHNSON

This instrument was acknowledged to me on November 21, 2019 (date) by

Brett Hoedl [name(s) of person(s)].

Jolene Prochko  
Notary Public

Print Name: Jolene Prochko

My commission expires:

09-20-2020

