

Tim O'Hearn, County Administrator

Schuyler County Legislators mentioned here:

Mike Lausell,
Van Harp,
Phil Barnes
Catherine Halpin

November 25, 2015

1pm 11-24-15 County Legislature Budge Meeting.

Sandra Steingraber of Trumansburg, Daryl Anderson of Schuyler Co., Mariah Plumlee, of Covert,

Request is made to make Public Comments.

State your name:

Daryl Anderson

1:02

“I appreciate you giving me the chance to talk. I have to be at work at 2, so I appreciate the chance. Two minutes and I'll be out of here. I've never been in this room, and I think that's a good thing, I've been just realizing we sort of count on you guys to keep the trains running and the roads fixed. I moved to Schuyler County five years ago, and I realized I've been very pleased, I haven't had cause to come here. And uh, I think there's things we can probably disagree about, but in general. So that's why when something just kind of jumps off the tracks, I just kind of thought I had to come down here and say something. We've seen a lot about Paris in the news, Beirut, and Russia, and hear about crazy people going in churches and shooting a bunch of little black kids and stuff like that, and all we hear about it terrorism. And terrorism is, what is it? Using violence or even the threat of violence to control a political agenda. We know they aren't doing it for money, and they aren't doing it for fame, they're doing it to try and get some political thing. And so, they're all always being incited by leader types, imams, religious leaders, political leaders, stuff like that. And there are just too many crazy people with guns and bombs out there that creates these terrible situations. I'm convinced it wouldn't happen if it weren't triggered that way. So I was really kind of disgusted when I found out Mr. Barnes had posted on social media that the group, the We Are Seneca Lake group, I know you disagree with them, I support them, I endorse their goals, I know some of you and many of you don't. They were talking about, there's going to be a peaceful march through downtown Watkins glen on the 29th, a climate march, they are going to be all around the country, and, downtown watkins, no blockades, no arrests, anything like that. And Mr. Barnes chose to post on there, today, yesterday, a little warning that its hunting season.

“Well, I'm a hunter. And I know when hunting season is, in downtown Watkins. Which is never. Now, why the heck do you do something like that? You know, I don't know if we'll get a straight opinion, and I'm not asking for a straight opinion, I think

maybe you know why something like that goes out there. I don't even think that Mr. Barnes did it to try and get some crazy, screw -loose case up in the woods in Hector, and I know a few of them, to get out there and mess with those hippies and their march. But the reality is, that's how these things happen. Especially when you start putting it on social media. Now, he didn't warn us to be careful crossing the street, he warned us about hunting season. Bring up the spectre of guns and violence and aggression and all you need is one person, who is not thinking right, now we do not need that in this town. We do not need to be like that sad town down in Tennessee where all those kids got killed, or anything like that. I know that this is not a big deal, that this is just us, but I would like to ask you to think about passing a resolution of censure for that. I know it's just a hand slap, maybe Mr. Barnes feels like he should apologize for it, I know he might realize it was a mistake, I know we all do that kind of thing with social media, you gotta wait before you hit that submit button. But I think this group is represented poorly by that.

“But honestly, I hope it doesn't happen, but if that march is going on, and there's a gun shot, up in the air, someone just trying to mess with people. but if there's a gun shot, then it's not going to be censure, I think Mr. Barnes would be under arrest.

“So that is inciting stuff that shouldn't be happening in this town. So I'd like you to think about it. I know you've got important business, and that this is a special meeting for finance and all of that. So, you know this is not the kind of you say oh we'll deal with it 2016, it really makes us look bad. I mean, we don't even really know now what's going to happen on Saturday. Hopefully we know what is going to happen. It's just going to be peaceful people marching down and expressing their opinions. But we got that one loose screw in there, and there was no need for that. Thanks.”

Sandra Steingraber:

“Hello, I'm Sandra Steingraber, and I live in Trumansburg, NY. My son was born in the Schuyler Co Hospital and he attends the Hidden Valley 4h camp every summer, so that's my connection to Schuyler County. I'm also the author of the letter you received asking for censure, I'm one of the organizers of the march in Watkins Glen, and I want to emphasize that it is a family friendly march, I'm bringing my two young children, a lot of young families will be present, my phone lit up as soon as the social media remark from Mr. Barnes was posted, that's how I noticed it was there, people wondering if it was safe to come, I didn't have any idea what that meant, so I got on Facebook and I asked Mr. Barnes what he meant by that remark, twice, and he didn't respond. I know that you receive notifications when someone responds to you on Facebook, so we don't know what to do, and I'm looking to you as political leaders, for guidance. I think a message needs to go out, not about the intent of what Mr. Barnes said, I don't know if we can ever discern what someone's intent was, maybe it was a joke, but he accept it, but he could send a message to people to think that this is incitement, or sanction, and it's frightening, and so I asked for censure, I'm going to underscore that ask, but also some kind of public statement from the legislature, that this is not tolerated, to indicate to the public that this was a mistake, and that just opposite is true, that Schuyler County leaders welcome everyone to their community and are interested in their well-being and safety. Thank you. And I'm happy to answer any questions about the letter that was submitted on behalf of We Are Seneca Lake or about the March, if you are interested in our plans.

Mariah Plumlee:

“My name is Mariah Plumlee and I am resident of Seneca County. I have three children. They are five and eight and ten. I am here today because I want you all to guarantee that they are safe and welcome to come to Watkins Glen on Sunday and take part in this family friendly march. What I really want to talk about is September 11, because for me the really scary and terrible things that happened in the news last week regarding Paris and Beirut and the awful tragedies we've seen in church basements in the south recently, that is a long trend that started at least, on my radar, on September 11, 2001. I was in Montana, in college, that day, and I started getting phone calls from the east coast because my Dad, he worked in the world trade center plaza, not one of the really tall buildings, one of the little ones, and we couldn't get in touch with him for hours. I actually saw his office building on the news with its side just missing. and um that was one of those experiences that really began my adulthood. I was under no illusions about the world being a kind or predictable place. My father survived, he lives here in Schuyler County. He's going to be joining me for Thanksgiving this week. He often cares for my children; they are lucky enough to have a grandfather who lives here with us now. I have a very hard time figuring out how much to tell my children about the world, after Sandy Hook, when they came home from school, I stood there, and I was like, what do you do? What do you tell them? I didn't tell them about it. I couldn't. I still haven't figured out how to be honest with my children about the state of the world today. It's very tricky for me because it starts to take away from my authority. I would like to tell them that if they listen to me and they do what I tell them, and they act right, then everything is going to be OK. That's not actually true. We've all seen that, we all know that. The comment that you made Mr. Barnes, was, well we all have opinions about what it was. I came here to this part of the family to raise my family. I brought my father here, we are here, we respect this place, we love this place, my children know this as their home. I would like a guarantee from all of you that they will be safe on Sunday, and that you will work to continue to teach our children that they safe in their home, regardless of what any of their beliefs are. That's what I would like today.”

Phil Barnes: You never mentioned any of the other posts. You just referred to one.
Sandra, would you like to talk about the other posts?

Steingraber: Well you made a post about, asking about capacity, and in the context of hunting, my understanding of capacity. I actually wrote my dissertation on white tailed deer, is that capacity equals the number of harvestable prey that a hunter can take. So that actually made me feel more frightened. Then there were some other random comments that I didn't understand.

Barnes: How about the other one about how did the dog sleep last night?

Steingraber : Yeah, I didn't understand that.

Barnes: That's right How about the one that has the nice article mentioning Jim Flaws. Did you figure that one out?

Steingraber: Mr. Barnes, why didn't you respond to my question asking you what you meant by these comments?

Barnes: first off, your demeanor of your email was something that I'm not going to get into a thing with, when I didn't do anything wrong.

Steingraber: I didn't send you an email, Mr. Barnes.

Barnes: Well, you did a post. I'll show you it. This is all about me.

Anderson: Can you just tell us why you did that one comment?

Barnes; You got time, you might want to get another, someone to pick up the grandkids, 'cause now that I've got my (papers making noise)

Anderson: Is this going on the agenda at this point? Is that how it works? Is this public comment, still?

[Affirmative.] (umm-hmm from woman, clerk, probably Stacy Husted).

Barnes finished putting down papers.

Barnes: OK, Now, that's what this is all about.

(everyone is looking a color copy of a yorkshire terrier with a bandana around his neck and a blue and green plaid leash).

First off, for the rest of you that don't know what's going on, this has gone to the FBI. I've met with the FBI. I've been exonerated by the FBI, and I also used the Sheriff as a test case unbeknownst to the Sheriff. What happens is I have multiple, Facebook accounts. Because of my job that I have. And I took a post of yours and shared it. And then, my brother, earlier in the day, was so excited at 56 years of age, living alone, that he got a dog, a companion. So there's multiple Facebook posts between me and him and the rest of my family, I mean ninety some other people, back and forth. Okay? Then, in the evening, I called my brother. He's out of breath. I said, what're you doing? He said, I'm out walking the dog. He lives in Rochester, murder capital of the state. So, I get on my other Facebook account, where I found your thing. I responded to my brother, because after my conversation, and me being an older brother, I have to kind of keep him straight, I remarked to him, just remember this Saturday is deer season. Okay? And anything else I did, till the next morning, till Mr. O'Hearn told me that I was posting on the other thing, that I was responding to other posts, whether it was a situation about the capacity of Gitmo, and whether we could hire it there (???) maybe we could put the refugees there till we could properly vet them before we let em out around the country. Then I asked my brother the next morning, how did the dog sleep? His new dog, and then the other thing was a response to somebody else about Jim Claus' (attitude? couldn't make out. 14:58)

So, Next thing you know, I get a very nice call from Tim, (O'Hearn) Margie Rodgers and some man had come in, they were complainin', he had suggested I reach out to 'em. I reached out to her. Her and I played phone tag, I continued on Saturday, playing phone tag, I never heard back from her, she left me a nice email, or a nice voice message, talking about going out having lunch, okay? So now I've had the FBI, now this. The Sheriff posts something on his Facebook on Sunday. It did the exact same thing, yesterday I met with the sheriff. I told him, I used you as a guinea pig. He wasn't real happy. So he checked his Facebook page, and saw exactly what happened, that I was able to put a post on his, and he's not even a friend of mine, on that account. So, THAT is what happened. There was no intent on my part. My part was to remind my young brother to be careful walking in the streets of Rochester, er or the parks of Rochester on the day after this, but it's this type of stuff, where people come in and only know one side of it. As long as its not your side, you don't wanna hear about it. That's my story. Now if you folks want to continue, I will set up appointments for you to be deposed, and if anybody has any mental anguish over this, terrible thing to happen over this (rattles paper) dog, then I want their doctors to post deposition too. And we'll go from there. (answering a raised hand) Yes ma'am.

Steingraber: May we respond? (answer in the affirmative) My response is to the legislature as a whole, to reiterate a call which is now made easier I believe, by Mr. Barnes' explanation that the impact of this comment, which went to the world, and may have been interpreted by some in the ways that we feared, rather in the ways that Mr. Barnes intended, will serve as a clarification, as the three of us have asked the statement that our children and families will be safe on Sunday, and that we are not being threatened.

Yes ma'am. (to Mariah Plumlee OKing her to speak)

Plumlee: Well, I think that's really wonderful to hear. I saw the comments that didn't make sense, and I was willing to assume that there was some kind of technological mix up, but the impact is still there. And when -

Barnes: Well I no have problem saying I'm sorry.

Plumlee: Qell, that's what I going to ask -

Barnes: don't tell me I intentionally did something, when I didn't.

Plumlee: I was not telling you that. But that's what I would like to-

Barnes: That's what the woman in the middle said. (referring to Sandra's seat between Daryl and Mariah)

Steingraber: No, Mr. Barnes, I asked you to clarify your intent on Facebook, and you declined to do that. I'm not interested in understanding your intent. I'm interested in explaining the effect that it has had on people. Evidenced by the phonecalls, emails, and

Facebook messages I've received from people who are frightened. The woman who contacted the FBI felt personally threatened. So, this can be put to rest by a statement from the legislature that indicates that we are not under threat. And that everyone is welcome here in Watkins Glen. It is the impact, not the intent, that we are interested in.

VAN HARP: (.....) Make a motion. Can I say something please?

“The sheriff is in the back row, and I think your request for us and even the Sheriff's department to guarantee your safety is a stretch. We can't. He can't. The FBI can't. The US Army can't. I mean, we could make it as safe as possible, as humanly possible, alright, that's one thing. Secondly, I'm going to bring up an event from a year and a half ago. I walked out this very room, in July the 14, with my two granddaughters, whom I was showing every step along the way of governance. They went out with petitions with me. They went out with me, knocking on door, introducing ourselves, went to a couple of the (.....) target defense (can't make out) and brought them in here when I was sworn in. And brought them to a meeting. The oil opposition, so to speak, was assembling at the hotel, and then came out here in the parking lot, on July (14th?) we walk out and the very first thing, it erupts. It's a step lower on the continuum of violence, if you will, but I was confronted right here, alright, threatened by, I think, she was a young woman, my granddaughters, they would have thought she was old, then I was pushed and shoved by a male member and we were getting ready to have a physical confrontation, and that's not part of what I wanted to show them, and mistakes happened.

“And I accepted the apologies, and I accepted the mistake, there's never been another problem alright? Based on the way Phil is explaining that, and he's younger than I am, and I have those difficulties technically too. I have sent amazing comments to uninterested, unparticipating, unaware, parties until I explained you know what happened. And as well as I know him now, through these couple of years in service here, I don't think he would ever make a threat to his, or incentivize, or consent or subconsciously set a tone for someone to do something like that. With his years of experience in law enforcement, he's got a background, he understands that psychology and that continuum of violence pretty well, I think. Bssed on his experience, I think a simple apology, which he just gave you, would be sufficient, after hearing both sides of it.

Daryl Anderson:

“Well, you know, everyone who saw that that - I think it's great it was a mistake. I think you heard me when I said that we all do that kind of thing, we hit the send button, and we don't, I think we should stick to one Facebook account, but that's your own choice. But to your point, I don't even know who those people are, but they were citizens and they were misbehaving. But it is fair isn't it? I mean we vote for you guys. It is fair, if you win, that you be held to a higher standard and even if you make a mistake, see, who knows how many people saw that? Fifty? Five hundred? A thousand people? Maybe it's only the Seneca Lake People who saw it. But they're not all here. But what if someone else who's you know trolling the site once in a while was to see it? The rhetoric hasn't always been that calm, and Mr. Barnes' comments occasionally on the issues, whether they are electoral, or whether they are LPG are not always that restrained, in my opinion.

I think it's, and certainly someone who doesn't know him as well as you do, for instance, all they saw was a Facebook post about the march, and a response from Mr. Barnes that said, watch out, it's hunting season. And then obviously many people could misinterpret that. I'm glad it was a mistake, But you can't get that whatever it is, back in the bag. Now, yeah, you don't wanna censure him for making that kind of mistake, I get that. But this apology to the three of us, that doesn't, how many people are out there right now that aren't getting that? It wouldn't be that hard for you or maybe for the Sheriff to put on his site and say there it was an unfortunate misunderstanding and of course we'll take every effort to make sure everyone's safe, and it's a family friendly event or whatever.

Sheriff: We're not going to be out there -

Daryl Anderson: Well, you're on duty.

Sheriff: yeah, but I'm not going to put that on my page and draw more attention.

Tim O'Hearn:

I'd like to make a suggestion, having had the opportunity to meet with Margie and Doug, they left me with the complete post, which wasn't submitted to the Legislature, which I subsequently did. In following the rationale here and your intent to make sure that people number one, it doesn't diminish the event, I assume that it one of your primary goals, and if a safe environment is created, would it be unfair to suggest that you, because the people that read this were reading your Facebook post, that's your audience, if upon hearing Mr. Barnes' explanation, you relay that to your readers, you did come and meet with the legislature this is what was offered, we feel comfortable that there isn't a safety threat, nor was there was intent to incite violence. You are asking the legislature to do the same thing, so either one or the other or both, would be, to me it would be logical that you took the time to come here, you took the trouble to get the reason for what I'm hearing, people are generally accepting of the response. You have the ability, the bully pulpit, the ability to reach the same people that are frightened by this, that's your audience, so conveying - again I can't speak for what the legislature does, no matter what they do, is it unreasonable to think that you could do the same?

Sandra Steingraber: It is my intent to report that we came here and had this conversation. I'll certainly do that. The people who listen to me are not the same people who would listen to a possibly insinuating message warning about hunting season.

O'Hearn: The people that read your page -

Sandra Steingraber: I feel that the-

O'Hearn: The people that read your posts. I mean, your audience, the people who would listen to you-

Sandra Steingraber: A reassurance from me is different from a reassurance from the legislature as a whole, and that's what I'm asking for -

O'Hearn: But you'd be willing to offer reassurance on your part.

Sandra Steingraber: I will certainly report. I'm not feeling so reassured. I'm going to report what was said. We came here to investigate and ask questions, and these are the answers that we got.

Phil Barnes: My next question is, are you gonna put something in the Finger Lakes paper, exonerating me, now that you know the facts? Compared to the slanderous stuff that was printed today in the paper. How are you going to change that message? 'Cause it's your press release they used.

Sandra Steingraber: I don't know what was printed in the paper today.

Barnes: They got the information from you. You're the originator here, you're the person everybody looks (forward to.....for answers...something...)

Sandra Steingraber: Mr. Barnes, these are your words.

Barnes: I'm just telling you what I know!

Sandra Steingraber: Mr. Barnes, these are your words, and whatever their intent, they have an effect.

Halpin: I just need some clarification. We have an individual who just happens to be a member of a legislature, but was not acting in his capacity as a legislator, posting on Facebook. And as I understand it, it was a technical glitch, that allowed this to happen, I don't begin to understand the workings of Facebook, have I got that wrong? that it was not a technical glitch?

Daryl Anderson: He made a mistake, and he put the wrong thing in the wrong place. It wasn't a glitch, he made a mistake.

Halpin: Oh, okay, so it was part of a post with relevance to some other conversation. that just happened to get here. An honest mistake, I would say.

Anderson: It could well be. That's what he says.

Halpin: You don't believe that then? I'm trying to understand where we are here. As far as I'm concerned, you put things on social media, things are gonna happen. And if you use social media, you better realize that. Things are going to happen. But people reading social media are also going to have to accept that things can happen, so I don't see how the legislature has an responsibility to you all. That's just my feeling. We have a private individual with a private conversation, who happened to make a post that didn't end up where it was supposed to end up. Frankly, I think the whole world is too afraid of too many things today. That's just my opinion, if I read that, along with the other posts, I

would think, something's going on here, 'cause this doesn't all fit, instead of automatically reacting negatively to one piece of it. But that's just my opinion. My point here is I don't see how the legislature is involved.

Well, our thirty minutes for talking ----- (someone would like to interrupt)

Van Harp: I think this an honor to serve on this group. And, to impune the entire group..... only one..... the interpretation that you're taking. I was not aware of it until I heard about it from another individual, and I looked at it, and when I saw it, without the background, I entirely agreed with you. I had not talked to Mr. Barnes, prior to this now, this conversation. Based on his explanation, and it was separate from us, . . . I don't think it's related to us number one, but if it was intentional, I would have had no compunction about some kind of censure, it appears to me, it sounds like a honest mistake, and knowing him that' what it was, I think an apology, that's my position, is sufficient.

(Lausell?) Just a quck suggestion. Wouldn't be as simple for Mr. Barnes to post on your Facebook page that -

Barnes: I don't want anything to do with it. I don't want anything to do with it.

Lausell: OK

Barnes: It's blocked, you can't post anything.

Our thirty minutes of voter participation are up. Resolutions and motions now.

Daryl Anderson: Thanks for hearing me out. Sorry I have to go.

Thank you.

“IN order for resolution of 33 ramitifaction of special meeting. Roll Call.

