

Dear Dan:

It is now two years since you -- and many of us -- were elected to the County Council. It was a joyful night when we all took the stage, holding up arms in victory, excited about what this first-time GOP county council might accomplish. Our wins that night gave us a 5 to 4 margin over council Democrats, meaning we had potential we never had before to enact policy -- but with that slim margin, we would have to stay united to remain effective.

Dan, with your reputation for hard work, demonstrated by your election efforts, and your ability to research and delve into topics -- as well as your past history with the Republican party -- we expected to accomplish a lot together as a council. In fact, when we were on the same page, some of our greatest teamwork included reforming the health department and passing a county-wide tax cut.

With our control of the council, we also thought we finally had the opportunity to fix the county's tax abatement ordinance, something for years we thought never possible. Even on election night, there had been rumblings that we could finally work on repealing the flawed ordinance -- which was designed to give tax breaks to companies that used union labor and employed liberal policies.

However, our excitement over that possibility soon faded when you decided to vote no on the tax abatement repeal. This ordinance was supported by the commissioners, and a letter was read during the meeting stating that. You did provide a statement as to why you voted no; however, this did not satisfy anyone but yourself. While there are times you can be the only Republican to vote no, this was not one of them. While you stated you were not included in the legislation process, documented communication proves otherwise. In fact, you were invited to the table for the very first group meeting on the topic, even before President Mark Root had an opportunity to participate.

We believed we had a great team in place. However, you found it necessary to seek out two candidates to primary your colleagues -- specifically Mark Root and Randy Figg -- and not give the new team time to work together. While primaries can be necessary when an elected official is not doing his job or supporting important initiatives, this was not the case. It was just personal. Elected officials very rarely will campaign against one of their colleagues. This can destroy any working relationship, which in turn means the body is not able to work effectively for the people they represent.

Without good cause, you also worked more than once with the minority party to remove our Republican attorney. If there were issues, those should have been discussed rather than working to have him removed. On another occasion, you failed to support another important piece of Republican legislation – the solar moratorium – and instead worked with the minority to craft a different solar ordinance. You followed up by publishing a column in the Granger Gazette implying that all the other Republican council members worked secretly with solar companies behind the scenes to give them an advantage, which was untrue. Additionally, you have led others to believe you may work with the minority on leadership elections in January, which could be a threat to Republicans' control of the council. You have been a long time Republican, so this does not square with the reputation you built for yourself within the party. It leads us to question your allegiance, and it does not help in our mission to build unity.

On several occasions, instead of working earnestly toward reconciliation, you have actually worked with a local tabloid reporter hostile to Republicans to air your grievances and make your colleagues look bad publicly. You have done the same through posts on Facebook.

We would like to achieve unity going forward and a better relationship. Here is what we consider a path to success:

1) Vote yes for the tax abatement repeal when it is re-presented in December. As you know, no ordinance is perfect, and if we see there are needed changes after the legislation is passed, an amendment can be made at a later date.

2) Please apologize to your colleagues Mark Root and Randy Figg for your involvement in their primaries and to Jamie O'Brien for working against him on the council. While you will most likely never be friends, they care about our county and believe they will work with you to make decisions that are best for all residents.

3) Support your Republican colleagues and the Republican attorney on the Council and do not work with the minority party to further your personal initiatives.

4) As you know, communication is important among colleagues. However, we have not been able to include you in conversations because even you admit you violated the sacred trust of the caucus by revealing to others what has been discussed. A caucus is

a special meeting among party officials, designed to discuss Republican strategy. While we hope reconciliation is still possible, we need to time to rebuild and re-establish that trust. We agree to caucus with you again, provided that you do not work against us over the next six months.

5) Agree to vote for all Republicans on the Rules Committee in January. The three-person Rules Committee includes the council's president, president pro-tempore, and vice president pro-tempore. Even you have expressed the importance of keeping all Republicans in leadership, when you failed to vote for the last Rules slate of candidates that included one Democrat.

Please consider this message a fair and decent plan in which we can come together again for the sake of party unity; for the sake of Republican- based legislation; and for the sake of our voters.

Sincerely,

Mark Root
Randy Figg
Joe Thomas
Amy Drake

P.S. This is a document we intend to share with other Republicans, as this situation has become a party issue.