

No Standing News

Since we have no standing, we stand with those left standing

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NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED

By Phil

In the case of Judge Joanne B. Mayberry, good deeds and good service are what the Rolla City Council wants to punish her for. Isn't it peculiar that the same officials who think nothing of violating the Missouri Constitution for the benefit of banks and the local merchant's lobby, turned into a bunch of hair-splitting, tight-fisted, penny-pinchers over a \$278 a month pension for one of the few elected officials we've ever had whose integrity and dedication never failed us.

Let's put this lavish pension into perspective. We're talking about less than \$3,500 dollars a year! That's one-seventh of the \$25,000 the state auditor proved Merle Strouse helped himself to in less than two years. It's a tenth of the \$35,000 the council is spending on PCB's private parking lot. It's less than half of the \$8,000 Mayor Morgan gets paid every year. It's a whole lot less than the \$38,636 the city counselor was paid in 1997 for convincing the council that they should continue paying HIM \$1,200 a month and \$85 an hour plus expenses for every hour he spends in court keeping HER from getting \$278 a month! Is that the council's idea of cost-effective?

Actually, this whole stingy business started two years ago. Mayor Morgan and several new council people have taken seats since then, so the new members of the council aren't guilty of the original

parsimonious sin. To be fair, perhaps they should be excused - until they pass the six months "honeymoon" period, that is. About October we'll know if they're going to just fall in line with Owsley and whoever else thinks this incredibly bad idea is worth pursuing, or if they're ready to start thinking for themselves.

A few carefully selected people have given the new council the "inside story" on this. I'm sure Ed Owsley and Attorney Beger haven't missed the opportunity to tell them that giving the Judge this measly little pension will set a DANGEROUS precedent for the city. That would be the precedent of electing someone to be on duty 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for 21 years at a salary so far below poverty wage that the Hubble telescope couldn't find it. It's unfortunate the new members have failed to invite Judge Mayberry and her attorney, Kent Robinson to appear before them to hear the other side. Perhaps there are some who haven't yet signed the Chamber Loyalty Pledge who would be sorely tempted to take another vote and call off the whole shabby matter.

In their workshop "briefings" did anyone tell them that she single-handedly reformed the Rolla Municipal Court so that it would, for the first time in history, conform to the Missouri Supreme Court rules for Municipal courts? Probably not. Some of them were in Jr. High or High School when the Missouri Supreme Court appointed her to their committee to revise those rules. Did they know that she was available to law enforcement almost every single day, night, holiday and weekend for 21 years? Probably not. That's about 180,000 hours of being continuously on-call with only a couple weeks off now and then. Did Ed tell them she was

paid only \$3,000 a year for the first 17 years and only \$15,000 for the last two years of her tenure? Bet he didn't talk about that. On average, she was paid less than 56 cents per hour. That's got to be one of the lowest salaries the city ever paid. Did John Beger tell them that she was, and still is, acknowledged by many lawyers and judges around the state to be one of the outstanding municipal judges in Missouri. Bet he didn't. I wonder? Do THEY ever wonder, if the city case is so good, why did the court of appeals send Beger's appeal back to Judge Lamb?

Well, I have no doubt that in whatever court this pathetic sideshow gets laughed out of next, the city will lose again. I just hope her attorney plans to demand that the city pay all her back pension, all of his very expensive time, plus a big, fat punitive damage award. Two years ago it would have been nice to see the city graciously reward someone who really deserves it. Especially someone whose hand wasn't always groping in the city purse. Unfortunately, it's much too late for that. The best they can do now is call off their donations to the "Beger-Bushie Retirement Fund" which probably has a lot more city money in it than Judge Mayberry has asked for.

"And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them."

Luke 11:46

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