



MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION

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Elizabeth L. Ziegler
Executive Director

Final Action: MEC No. 19-0018-I, Joe Aull

Date: June 4, 2019

The Missouri Ethics Commission took final consideration of the complaint filed against Joe Aull at its June 4, 2019 meeting.

Joe Aull is the former City Administrator for Lexington, Missouri. The complaint alleged that Aull “most likely” violated the provisions of Section 115.646, RSMo, between December 2017 and February 6, 2018, in that, during that time, he led the effort to promote and solicit voter approval for a ballot initiative related to a new water plant and water improvement system. Section 115.646, RSMo prohibits the use of public funds “to advocate, support or oppose any ballot measure.” Notably, the statute does not prohibit efforts related to education.

The MEC investigation found that on December 28, 2017, Mr. Aull became the Lexington Administrator. After being hired, Mr. Aull was tasked by the mayor with the responsibility of getting information out to residents regarding Lexington’s water system. Documentation supported that Mr. Aull updated the city council of the actions he was taking.

In connection with Mr. Aull’s efforts, he met with a number of groups, clubs, and organizations to make presentations on the water bond issue where some of the other city officials were in attendance. Further, Mr. Aull and other city officials hosted a series of public meetings intended to provide information to residents. The materials produced and distributed by the City at these meetings did not appear to contain any specific language advocating for the water ballot measure.

Lastly, Mr. Aull discussed the ballot measure in a newspaper column titled, “View from city Hall, by City Administrator Joe Aull.” The investigation found that this particular column was an editorial section offered by The Lexington News at no cost to the city.

The investigation found no evidence to support the allegation that Mr. Aull used city resources to “advocate, support, or oppose” the ballot measure.

From the facts presented, the Commission found no reasonable grounds exist to support a violation of the Chapter 115.646, RSMo, and dismissed the complaint.

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