

I hereby exercise my right of written reply stated in the Council meeting minutes from 21st February 2018 **RESOLUTION NO.2018/GM2276 5/0**

I categorically refute that Council agreed to rotate the role of Deputy Mayor during the inaugural special meeting on 4th April 2016.

FACT. The Mayor let Item No SPEM1. (Appointment of Deputy Mayor) lie on the table until The General Meeting on the 20th April 2016 because he thought it more appropriate to have a full Council, as Cr Attwood was an apology at that first meeting.

The General Meeting on the 20th April 2016 Item No GMCCS2 (Appointment of Deputy Mayor) **RESOLUTION NO.2016/GM1675 5/0**

I specifically recall the Mayor asking each Councillor, starting with Cr Attwood, about the Deputy Mayor's role. Cr Attwood stated that he had just been the Mayor, so he did not want to do the Deputy Mayors role. In fact, his words were something like "I've had the number one job and I will never be number two".

Cr Bethel was a definite NO. He stated he would never do the job as he was far too busy to take on the Deputy Mayors role.

Cr Barnes expressed interest in the role, but had had advice from the CEO that he could not take on the role as Deputy Mayor. It is my understanding that the advice was something about if the Mayor took ill, Cr Barnes would not be able to fulfil a fulltime position as Deputy Mayor (Acting Mayor) whilst being a full time police officer.

The Mayor moved and Cr Attwood seconded the resolution to elect me as the Deputy Mayor.

I accepted the position of Deputy Mayor which was voted on 5/0. As above, there was no decision to rotate the position.

Background

The minutes of that Inaugural meeting on the 4th April 2016 or the General meeting held on the 20th April 2016 does not state that there was any decision made to rotate the position.

This does not support Cr Barnes claims. In fact, I put to you Cr Barnes, that the minutes prove that your *question without notice* to me, Cr Gallagher, is misleading to Council and the Public.

Apparently in early 2017, Cr Barnes got advice that led him to believe that he could indeed do both roles.

Cr Barnes has never approached me personally to ask me to step down as Deputy Mayor but has sent Cr Attwood to tell me that I should step down. I told Cr Attwood at our one and only discussion about it, that I would stand my ground on the advice of the wider community.

I am also aware that Cr Barnes has been pressuring the Mayor into asking me to step down.

I am very concerned that this has put the Mayor under a lot of stress.

I come from a practical commonsense background and have lived in this shire for almost all my working life. A lot of that time was spent as a head-stockman and manager of cattle stations.

The head stockman supported the manager and worked with him in the running of the property. If he didn't, the situation would be untenable. We never changed head stockman every 12 months.

I have known the Mayor, Warren Devlin, for 24 years and I respect what he has achieved in his role as Mayor, both in this council and his last council and also in his private life and what he has done for the economy of this shire.

Cr Bethel has often spoken of long term stability and this is exactly what it is; 4 years, 4 councilors, 1 Mayor, 1 Deputy Mayor.

Regarding my so called perceived alliance with the Mayor, it is my understanding as Deputy Mayor that my role is to support the Mayor which I do but I also share his vision and passion in caring about the community by creating prosperity, sustainability and a stable, transparent and honest Council. The perceived alliance you have with Cr Attwood however, is seen as a negative by the wider community.

I take offence at the gutter politics tactics you embrace, as on two occasions you have tried to belittle me in front of the public.

You say *council is not about an alliance of thoughts or wishes*. I believe this challenge is simply about your ego as you are treading over myself, a fellow councilor, in your quest to achieve your political aspirations with little or no regard for our community.

I am receiving feedback from the wider community that they have grave concerns that you, Cr Barnes, are blurring the lines between your roles as a Councilor and a Police officer.

The other concern from myself and the community is that you are an elected member of council, elected by the people, to represent the people and it is my belief you will not be able to carry out that role effectively whilst taking long service leave. It is my understanding that you will not be in the community for approx 6 months. I acknowledge that Council has approved your attendance at every second Council meeting via digital media, nevertheless the fact remains you will be on full Council remuneration from the community purse whilst on holidays for 6 months.

Another concern, if you were Deputy Mayor, should the Mayor fall ill or for some other reason be unable to perform his duties, how could you fulfill that role of full time Mayor, as in your present role as a full time Police Officer you are paid to be on call at all times.

I have referred to other local government organisations such as Carpentaria Shire Council and Charters Towers Shire Council who do not rotate the role of Deputy Mayor. It is not considered common practice.

You mention your reason for wanting to be Deputy Mayor is to gain skills in that role. This is, apparently, to my and the community's detriment.

I believe you have been pressuring Council since early 2017 to rotate the role of Deputy Mayor, (4 councilors, 4 years) however, you appeared to be the only one wanting to take up the role.

Cr Will Attwood – Mayor for 4 years, councilor for 2 years, policeman for 40 years. Had stated he has no wish to be No 2.

Cr Warren Bethel - many years in local government, had stated he didn't want to do the job (far too busy)

You, Cr Troy Barnes – Councilor for 2 years, policemen for however many years, University studies in media and politics. I've been informed you wish to do at least 12 months as Deputy Mayor because you aspire to run for Mayor in the next election. I have no problem with you running for Mayor. I have an issue with you disrupting this Council, dividing this council and arguably putting this Council into disrepute in order to position yourself as the Deputy Mayor running into the next Local Government elections in 2020.

Leadership. Your definition of leadership concerns me. The people of the Etheridge Shire elected our Mayor as the leader for his passion, skills and his ability to develop our shire.

I share his vision of creating jobs and wealth in order to produce a sustainable future for the residents of our shire.

My belief is that in our roles as councilors, it is our duty to support the Mayor, not to try and position ourselves to enhance our own political aspirations.

In accordance with standing orders and my right of reply, I move that this address be tabled and adopted in full into the minutes of this general meeting and furthermore be included in the next edition of the Inform news for public scrutiny for those that are not tech savvy and not able to use the internet. I also request that Troy Barnes's question without notice from the last general meeting be included in the same edition of the Inform.

Having regard to all above mentioned arguments, I believe Cr Barnes has made an untrue statement and misled this council and the community, thereby compromising the integrity of this council.

I hereby call on Cr Troy Barnes to resign.