

STATEMENT REGARDING RECENT EVENTS AND CONCERNS

We, the Hyde Park City Council and Mayor, would like to take the opportunity to address and clarify some issues regarding Mr. Grunig, the City public works director, and the former city employees who have recently made statements regarding the incident, disciplinary actions, and appeal process.

We were very concerned about this isolated incident. We want to assure our residents and those that do business with Hyde Park that they are safe. We feel confident this was an isolated incident. We feel the comments and statements being circulated through social media have not always been accurate and are counter-productive. We hope that as residents we can move forward and come together to address the issues facing the city.

As a City Council and Mayor, every action we take requires us to balance and weigh multiple interests and legal rights. As we do so, we are always focused on reaching fair solutions that protect the rights of the City and those the City serves. As part of this balancing and weighing, the City, as a governmental employer, has a number of restrictions and procedures regarding employment that it is required by law to follow. These restrictions and procedures are unique to governmental employers and protect both the City and its employees. In particular, there are due process requirements before a public employer may impact a public employee's job.

Regarding Mr. Grunig, the City Council was required to review the Mayor's decision to retain and demote Mr. Grunig by way of his appeal. The City Council was well informed of the facts and complaints. Based on the facts, policies, and laws involved, we determined that suspension was a more appropriate discipline than demotion. Our actions are not to undermine or downplay the serious nature of Mr. Grunig's actions. The City Council had a narrow scope of issues to consider, and could not consider issues beyond that scope. All of the other comments related to other acts by Mr. Grunig were not part of the appeal. It should be noted that former mayor Bob Christensen was not part of the appeal. All facts, state law, and constitutional guidelines were known and acted upon. The complex legal and factual issues involved in these kinds of determinations are difficult to summarize in a short article or statement. We would urge everyone to read our written decision that more fully addresses these issues in order to better understand our actions.

As it regards the former employees who have made comments regarding the City's actions, we would like to state that the City has heard the grievance. The City strongly disagrees that their rights were violated. However, we recognize and appreciate the work they have performed for the City and wished that they would have chosen to stay with the City. The mayor has had several conversations with them, both before and after their resignation, and the City continues to offer them employment with the City. The City is certain that we can resolve all parties' concerns amicably.

We, like all Hyde Park citizens, are striving to do our best for our city. We express our hope that all City employees will be able to work together to continue to make Hyde Park a wonderful place to work and live. We are currently reworking our policies to match state guidelines. And we will continue to review our procedures, policies, and actions to ensure that all City officials and employees are serving our community in the best ways possible.