

Stephens Fires Back Against Selby's Allegations

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Last night at the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly meeting Assemblyman Mel Stephens had his first opportunity to speak on the record about last week's full exoneration of financial reporting violations brought against him by Borough Mayor Jerome Selby.

Selby had filed a complaint against Stephens, claiming he did not report income made while representing a local woman in a lawsuit against the borough. The Alaska Public Offices Commission met on April 1st and found that Stephens did not earn any money in that case during a period that needed reporting on his financial disclosure forms. The staff of the APOC recommended dismissal of the complaint and the full commission agreed on April 8th.

Stephens spent about 10 minutes lining out the events that prompted Selby's complaint, and feels the mayor's actions and those of the borough attorney, Cheryl Brooking, were intentionally meant to smear him.

"All three of the pleadings that I have just quoted from were similarly quoted in my answer to Jerome Selby's complaint. That answer was served upon Mr. Selby on March 4. So even before they received the April 7 APOC staff report recommending that Mr. Selby's groundless complaint be dismissed, both Mr. Selby and Cheryl Brooking clearly knew beyond any legitimate doubt that I had not received and failed to report any income from the Helen Inge case."

Assemblywoman Louise Stutes grilled Borough Manager Bud Cassidy about exactly why the assembly was not made aware of the intent to file the complaint:

(Stutes) "Was that APOC complaint filed on behalf of the borough, or was it filed by Mr. Selby individually?" (Cassidy) "Mr. Mayor, Assembly Member Stutes, going through the record this past week the claim, the complaint was signed by Jerome Selby as mayor of the Kodiak Island Borough." (Stutes) "So you're telling me it was filed by the borough?" (Cassidy) "It was filed by Jerome Selby as mayor on behalf of the borough." (Stutes) "So you're telling me this complaint was filed and nobody on this assembly was notified of this complaint being filed before it was filed?" (Cassidy) "You know, I couldn't tell you that; you'd have to answer that question." (Stutes) "Well if you were privy to that information and the mayor was privy to that information before it was filed, I'm appalled that this didn't come through the assembly. So what you're telling me, unless I'm misinterpreting it, is that we, as

the assembly of this Kodiak Island Borough, filed a claim against one of our own and we didn't even know it.

Even though the APOC has ruled and dismissed the complaint, Stephens indicated the aftermath has yet to play out:

"I've been asked what happens next, and I've truthfully responded that I just have to think about. These are serious matters I don't shoot from the hip on them. What I can and do tell you however is that conduct as outrageous as filing a completely bogus APOC complaint, because of some perceived entitlement to slander and attempt to intimidate an elected official, who doesn't happen to buy into your perception of how this borough should be run, is not something that can be dismissed by simply looking into the camera, smiling, and saying, "Oh well, never mind." We have a big problem here and it needs to be fully and effectively addressed.

The Assembly's next regular meeting is scheduled for May 2nd.