



KALAMAZOO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

In the Pursuit of Extraordinary Governance...

Dear Commissioners,

As your newly elected Chair and Vice Chair of the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners, we want to begin our tenure being as open and transparent as possible. We strongly believe transparency and accountability within county government are of the utmost importance to both the residents we serve and each other.

We have watched over the years as seeds of distrust and manipulation have entangled this Board and have gotten in the way of doing the work that matters most: Serving the residents of Kalamazoo County.

That ends today!

We feel we have a moral obligation and duty to explain to you, and the people of Kalamazoo County, why County Commissioner Julie Rogers resigned as Board Chair.

On June 30, we sat down with Commissioner Rogers, not as colleagues, but as friends, to discuss her conduct and how she has treated fellow board members and county government staff.

This difficult conversation was months in the making. We were first alerted about her conduct by a county government official in February regarding her conduct at a NaCo conference and set a meeting for March 13 to ask her to resign as board chair. This was the same day the county government buildings were ordered closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Current Board Chair, Tracy Hall, has personally compiled numerous occasions in which Julie Rogers created an unprofessional and difficult work environment for county government employees, from department staff to those working in the highest levels of county government, examples including:

- Repeatedly trying to delegate tasks to staff and Electeds outside of her authority.
- Manipulating information to garner control among the Board and staff.
- Repeatedly contacting staff which reports to the Administrator.
- Disparaging county government leaders while intoxicated at a social function in March.
- Trying to go around the Sheriff to declare a State of Emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic, something she did not have the authority to do.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Even though no formal complaints have been filed against Julie Rogers, there has been much time and energy devoted to dealing with issues related to her conduct. Most recently, Julie Rogers contacted many county government officials during late hours while intoxicated.

This letter is no way meant to shame Julie. As her friends, we believe she needs help and have encouraged her to get it.

At the same time, we don't want to begin our time as Chair and Vice Chair with a cloud of secrecy hanging over the county board. We believe in leading by example and that includes speaking up even when it's difficult to do so.

Our pledge to you is to keep an open mind and open door to whatever problems or concerns occur to do our very best to serve Kalamazoo County.

Sincerely,

Chair Tracy Hall
Vice Chair Michael Seals