

7/12/2023

Greetings Relatives!

I Joel Merrifield

RVIT Enrolled member and current elected Tribal council member from 2021 thru 2024.

I have no negative ill intentions of causing harm and or burden the RVIT with any selfish acts especially violating any Oath of Office neither RVIT and or the USA. I have no intentions of causing harm in my community and or at the RVIT council chambers. I'm always positively motivated in any work that I apply myself too.

Regarding the current situation of Recalling of myself for any such violations *I'm not guilty*.

During the January 19<sup>th</sup> , 2023 RVIT council meeting during executive session a motion was made regarding a Severance pay to then current TBA. I did not make the motion nor did I second that motion – *I abstained* - that vote came out as a 3-1-2

I abstained due to the fact that there was too much unclear information at the table for myself to fully support the motion. The TBA had submitted two separate letters of complaints on two active elected RVIT council members that was Michelle Downey and Lewis Whipple- those letters were submitted to the RVIT table on 1/19/23- during the reading and discussion the vice president started discussing the actions of the TBA of misuse of his RVIT tribal council credit card usage during the last week of November 2022 where himself and the TBA and council member Randall Britton traveled to the Tribal Leaders Summit in Washington DC- If that was such a concern why would it come up more than a month later when the fiscal office staff had been aware of the credit card usage, and not then notify *any* of the RVIT executive branch members then to address misuse.

During the time frame of January 20<sup>th</sup> thru the 31<sup>st</sup> I was only aware of the RVIT Chairman making contact with the tribes legal team whom was drafting and working on a legal document of the severance payment offer no amount was discussed as I anticipated that to come back to the table.

I didn't see that actual document at all in person in paper form until later in February 2023. On January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 the RVIT vice chairman sent out a group text to call an Emergency meeting within a 4 hour time frame that same evening at 6pm- I immediately responded asking what was the emergency- he stated back to the group text " tribal council concerns" I advised that we were hosting a three day work session with our new broadband contractor team that traveled into Covelo from all over the United States. No text reply nor any phone calls were received/made regarding the importance of an emergency meeting. I was out of the county and didn't attend this meeting. It wasn't until later that evening around 8:30 pm that the vice chairman sent out a large text thread stating the large wire transfer that took place the day before on 1/30/23.

The following day 2/1/2023- another emergency meeting was called again sent thru text from the Chairman Randall Britton- the executive session included one topic the severance payment made to the TBA via the Tribes bank account- and the suspend/remove Randall Britton until further investigation.

I voted No due to not having any valid proof or any bank receipt of this large transaction that had taken place earlier that week. Nothing on paper was presented nor any fiscal documents were provided to

make a decision for myself at that time. Only verbal. The last two years of tribal council work and making important decisions there's always back up documentation at the table to make a decision either yay or nay or abstain.

I believe that's what all this recall petition and election is in regard to especially from being sued in our own RVIT Tribal Court since the first week of March 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2023 to be exact. I recall when we were served a Tribal Court Summons in person after 5 pm from RVIT staff member or legal advocate Jessica Goodrow whom stated " don't hate me I'm just doing my job then ducked out the buffalo room" lol.

That court summons included 4 current active tribal council members- RB, SH, TW and myself, and staff members then CFO Howard Funchess (contracted employee less than 12 months), RC- Human Resources RVIT and then past employee Linda Sacks past TBA. That lasted thru the end of June 2023, so in that time frame of March thru June 2023 I wasn't able to make any comments on the process that eventually ended in a dismissal with out prejudice from Mona O and Deb Hutt as her legal advocate. That entire debate was regarding the same issue of illegal actions of the severance payment that myself had no participation in.

The facts that only one tribal council person acted in regards to safe guarding the RVIT councilmembers and RVIT a legal suit of sexual harassment is a real threat and can still be activated from my understanding. I feel that Randall made the decision on stop a larger situation on his own, but the remainder of the RVIT council as not fully included. I've known Randall all my life he's a good person and I believe he didn't act in any malicious way to benefit himself.

In conclusion us three active tribal council members have been removed with a false unethical swearing in that was led by the current election committee and tribal council liaison to keep us in a position to continue to be recalled and sued by local tribal members. The RVIT tribal court Judge made a ruling on 6/25/2023 that VOIDED the election results so that applies to all actions that took place since 5/25/23.

Thank you to all the local tribal members whom helped Challenge the recall election as well- you're your Voices!

Especially the firing of RVIT staff member Otis Brotherton who has been wrongfully terminated due to supporting us during this suit process. He does not deserve to be terminated due to doing his job duties that are under his scope of work providing services of court advocacy for victims. We are victims that needed guidance and support from our local tribal resources as we are tribal members.

Everyone Deserves a Second chance- , Cheaters never Prosper, and Leaders build more leaders!

Please exercise your most valuable right as a tribal member and united states citizen- by

Voting NO on this Recall Election of 2023!!!

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joel Merrifield', written over a white background.

Joel Merrifield

