

## Press Clippings 01/10/20

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### Residents file ethics complaints against Elgin council members

By: Elena Ferrarin



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Two residents have filed ethics complaints with the city of Elgin, one alleging electioneering by Councilman Terry Gavin and one alleging a conflict of interest by Councilwoman Rose Martinez.

Residents Jose Bosque and Anthony Ortiz filed the complaints Wednesday with the city's corporation counsel, Bill Cogley, who also is the city's ethics officer.

Gavin and Martinez said they don't believe they violated ethical standards.

"I will be promptly reviewing these matters and intend to provide the city council the legal opinions on the matters," Cogley said.

The complaint against Gavin is about an email the councilman sent March 28 to a resident who asked Gavin for his recommendations regarding the April 2 election, Ortiz said.

The resident sent his inquiry to Gavin's city email. Gavin responded, also from his city email, saying he supported voting for council members Toby Shaw and Rose Martinez, and newcomer Steve Thoren. Gavin called Tish Powell "the biggest problem" and newcomer Baldemar Lopez, now a councilman, "a bad actor."

"It's OK if he did it on his personal email, but he was doing it on city property and city government servers," said Ortiz, who ran for a council seat in April and lost.

Illinois election law prohibits using public funds for political or campaign purposes.

Elgin's code of ordinances includes an ethics act, adopted in 2004, that applies to officers and employees of the city, as required by law. The city's act mirrors that state ethics act, which prohibits participating in political activities such as soliciting votes on behalf of a candidate.

Gavin said he's known for years the resident who asked him for election recommendations and "stupidly" didn't focus on the fact that the inquiry came to his city email.

"I got hit with a lot of requests from different sources asking who to vote for in the election and who I supported. I didn't even think about the platform he was in," Gavin said.

Still, Gavin said, "I've discussed it with lawyers. I've been told it's not electioneering."

The complaint against Martinez alleges that, in light of her job as a bus driver for **Elgin Area School District U-46**, Martinez should have recused herself from a council vote in July approving a bus depot and offices on Chicago Street for the school district. The complaint also references a vote regarding school resource officers for the district, but Martinez only cast a vote at the council's committee of the whole meeting in late September and was absent for the final vote in October, records show.

Martinez declined to comment other than to say, "I don't feel I did anything wrong." She quit her U-46 job in December to spend more time helping her elderly mother, she said.

Ortiz and Bosque spoke at the council meeting Wednesday without identifying the council members named in their complaints.

Ortiz obtained Gavin's email after filing a request in December under the Freedom of Information Act asking for city council members' emails, records show.

As for Martinez, Ortiz and Bosque said it seemed obvious to question her voting record on matters related to U-46. Councilwoman Carol Rauschenberger also works for the school district; Ortiz and Bosque said they didn't know that.

The two men said they filed the complaints in light of Mayor David Kaptain's announcement that he wants an ethics ordinance for the city that prohibits council members from engaging in lobbying activities. Lopez is a lobbyist registered with the state of Illinois.

"If they are going to do an ethics overhaul, let's do the whole overhaul. Let's not just pick and choose," Bosque said.

In his remarks at the council meeting, Ortiz also alleged that a council member took campaign donations from Jimmy John's, which later sought approval from the council for parking limits near its shop in downtown Elgin.

State campaign records show Martinez got \$5,000 donations each from James Liautaud and Grazina Liautaud in January 2015. The downtown Elgin location opened in summer 2017.

Martinez said the donations came from the parents of the founder of Jimmy John's, who is also named James Liautaud and who did not contribute money to her campaign.

## **Lake Park tabs Glenbard administrator as new superintendent**

**By: Bob Smith**



Jeff Feucht

Lake Park High School District 108 has tabbed an administrator from a neighboring system to be its next superintendent.

Jeff Feucht, who has served as assistant superintendent for educational services in Glenbard High School District 87 since 2012, will assume his new duties July 1. He will replace Lynn Panega, who is retiring after 16 years at Lake Park, including the past 10 as superintendent.

The school board unanimously approved his three-year contract Wednesday night. He will be paid \$240,000 in his first year, but will pay his own contribution to the teacher retirement system.

"Dr. Feucht demonstrated communication, leadership and interpersonal skills that ranked high in our superintendent search survey," school board President Barbara Layer said in a written statement. "The board of education is confident that he brings a student-centered vision that will make him an asset to our entire Lancer community."

Feucht, 43, becomes the seventh superintendent in the district's 64-year history.

In his current role in Illinois' third-largest high school district, Feucht has led the instructional leadership team in receiving national recognition for providing sustained professional growth programs for its teachers and closing student enrollment gaps in advanced placement courses by race and income. District 108 officials said he also brings extensive experience in strategic planning, instructional technology and implementation of innovative course offerings.

He previously served as an assistant principal at Glenbard West High School and taught at Bartlett High School in Elgin Area District U-46.

A native of Elgin, Feucht said he is aware of Lake Park's "reputation as a tight-knit and supportive community."

He said he looks forward to meeting with students, staff and community members.

"My goal going in is to work hard to sustain the great work already going on ... and to engage the entire school community," he said.

Glenbard Superintendent David Larson praised Feucht's "driving commitment to excellence and his quest for educational opportunities for all of our students," in a statement released Wednesday night. "Through his vast knowledge, strong work ethic and collegial collaboration, he has had a significant positive impact on our educational program."

Feucht said he will put the needs of students first, but "to support students also means we support the professional growth of teachers."

He spent 11 years as a high school English and social studies teacher, he said, and recognized the profession's importance as far back as his own high school days when an English teacher in Elgin "made all her students feel like they had a talent to share" and ultimately inspired him to go into education.

The Lake Park school board worked with a search firm during the first semester of the school year to find the new superintendent. Officials said the process involved stakeholder surveys and focus groups.

Feucht, who lives in Park Ridge with his wife and two daughters, has a bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois, a master's degree from Aurora University and a doctoral degree in educational leadership from Aurora University in 2011.

Lake Park has two campuses in Roselle and serves roughly 2,600 students from Itasca, Keeneyville and Medinah, and portions of Roselle, Bloomingdale, Hanover Park and Wood Dale.