

A possible election challenge to Washoe DA Gammick

Opinion – On Politics

By Jim Clark
Special to the Bonanza

INCLINE VILLAGE, Nev. — Followers of the Village League to Save Incline Assets know from reading the Bonanza that after years of effort and megadollars in legal fees Washoe District Court Judge Brent Adams ruled this month that Washoe County must comply with three Nevada Supreme Court rulings as well as the Nevada State Board of Equalization order requiring the Washoe County Assessor to roll back 2006 Incline/Crystal Bay real property assessments to 2002/2003 values. This will result in tax rebates to Incline/Crystal Bay property owners of about \$13 million plus interest for 2006 alone and could be substantially higher as other affected years are reviewed.

Maybe it's time readers found out, as Paul Harvey would say, "the rest of the story." Over the years Village League officers, directors and supporters have railed at some annoying issues that arose in the pursuit of this result. In the heat of the battle Village League President Maryanne Ingemanson authored a guest opinion in The Nevada Observer pointing out that the Washoe County District Attorney's Office represents: (1) the Washoe County Assessor, (2) the Washoe County Board of Equalization and (3) the Washoe County Board of Commissioners. She inquires: How about those conflicts in interest, and who's looking out for taxpayers?

At the time she wrote the editorial the Nevada Supreme Court had already ruled

that Washoe County's method of assessing Incline/Crystal Bay properties violated the Nevada Constitution, yet District Attorney Richard Gammick persisted in advising county agencies to engage in multiple appeals (which brought the same decisions by the Nevada Supreme Court), rely on administrative defenses and, generally, to stall.

Echoing Ms. Ingemanson's frustrations, Incline's William Silcox authored an open letter to Richard Gammick, published two years ago in the Bonanza, asking: "Why would you, the District Attorney of Washoe County, take the side of the Washoe County Assessor against the Washoe County Board of Equalization ... on an appeal ... in the First Judicial District Court, Carson City?"

Yet, Gammick has been reelected district attorney three times, never facing opposition.

With victory in hand and an election scheduled for next year, Village League officers, directors and supporters met last week in Incline to shake the hand of Roger Whomes, who is organizing a challenge to Gammick's reelection. Whomes served in the Washoe County District Attorney's Office from 1986 to 2006. Currently he is in private practice. Roger, age 51, runs marathons, fishes, hunts and loves dogs.

He told his audience he is a strict constructionist and a supporter of the 2nd Amendment.

Then the "rest of the story" unfolded. Citing reports by respected Nevada news

media, Whomes described litigation filed on Oct. 31, 2008, by veteran district attorney office staffers placing Gammick in the center of an array of charges in a sexual harassment lawsuit; he outlined public reports, including those in the Reno Gazette Journal, about Gammick's "outrageous conduct" in connection with the pending Darren Mack murder case (Mack shot Reno Family Law Judge Chuck Weller and is charged with murdering his wife); and described how, just last August, Gammick used guest editorial space in the Reno Gazette Journal to criticize a story reporting that his son was in arrears on child support

payments and was being shielded by the district attorney's office.

My guess is that as the election nears we are going to hear even more of the "rest of the story."

The remaining question is: Now that the issue of unlawful collection of taxes has been decided, what Washoe County officials are going to pay a price for jerking the Village League around for years?

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