

PRESS RELEASE

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Statement from Mayor Sheila Brillson Regarding Winski's Charges

The recent political release from Joie Winski's campaign regarding Nipsco demands a direct response from me as C.E.O. of this community. Winski's 10 paragraph statement is riddled with factual mistakes, bold faced lies and innuendo. I am extremely troubled to read that Ms. Winski is referring to terms of a document that I have never even seen. Ms. Winski has never spoken with me regarding her allegations so this begs the question--where is she getting this information and the twisted misinformation?

Unfortunately Ms. Winski is playing pure politics with the hard work that we have been doing on behalf of the citizens who are paying the mounting legal bills. I know Ms. Winski may not like to hear this but this is still my administration and I, not Chuck Oberlie, have negotiated with NIPSCO. While that doesn't make for such great political hay for her campaign, I ask our citizens to look at my record of over 18 years of public service to this city. I have consistently and relentlessly stood up for what was right and what was in our citizens' best interest. I can guarantee you that in the waning days of my mayoral term, I'm not going to change now!

My goal in getting into this litigation was to ensure that the LaPorte Maintenance Center stays open so that my constituents do not have increased response times in emergencies and weather-related power outages. NIPSCO discussions last week ensured that this would be the case and that additionally, three repair equipment sites would be located in Michigan City. Thus, NIPSCO will not only meet my demands but they will exceed them.

I cannot, in good conscience, stand back and let our taxpayers continue to foot the bill when our issues have been resolved. But I also cannot stand back and let a candidate use my work to create an issue for her political agenda. The truth is very clear here- based on the legal analysis from three municipal attorneys (LaPorte, Plymouth, Michigan City). Mr. Friedman, without authority of any kind, began negotiations with NIPSCO--work we were paying Attorney Doyle from Indianapolis to do. It appears that we may have been able to settle this issue last fall had Mr. Friedman not inserted himself into the case and assumed the unauthorized job of secretly negotiating for the City of Michigan City and the other municipalities as well.

Perhaps Ms. Winski does not yet understand the role of mayor. On a daily basis, I must sit down in face-to-face, confidential meetings with the CEO's and business leaders of many area corporations. These are not secret meetings; these are good-faith discussions that develop trust and build relationships that help move Michigan City forward.

Ethics is the cornerstone of good public service. I cannot help but notice that words that were printed in Mr. Friedman's comments in Monday's News Dispatch are echoed verbatim in Ms. Winski's press release. For Ms. Winski to use insider information and misinformation from a political ally to twist an issue for political purposes is unethical and demonstrates extremely bad judgment.