

Councillor Thapar censured for third time

Autumn MacDonald – Observer Reporter

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Stripped of his committees and having to seek council permission before representing the city, Coun. Sushil Thapar says he will continue to work for the taxpayers of Quesnel.

Monday night council unanimously passed a motion to censure Thapar for a third time, while stripping him of committee appointments, removing him from rotating acting mayor duties and requiring him to seek council permission prior to representing the city.

“It’s unfortunate we had to take these measures,” Mayor Mary Sjostrom said.

Council quoted a number of concerns for the restrictions, including respectful communication and how confidential information is released.

In the June 29 issue of the Cariboo Observer, Thapar was quoted calling his colleagues “freakin’ idiots” after hearing of the alleged “wrongful” dismissal of long-term city employee Meriel Wild.

The termination could have huge financial implications for taxpayers.

Thapar apologized to his colleagues for his remarks during the Monday meeting.

However, he maintains the restrictions imposed upon him will not deter him from continuing to work “on behalf of the taxpayers.”

Thapar also said the sanctions placed on him only served to “discredit” him as a person and as a councillor.

“I’ve done nothing wrong,” he said.

“I did not break my oath. I have an oath to taxpayers. I will not back down.”

Thapar has been censured twice before. The first instance it was alleged he was disrespectful to city staff, a claim he denies. The second censure was due to an alleged breach of confidentiality. Another claim he adamantly denies.

Sjostrom says the city and council is moving on, regardless of Thapar. “Nobody is hiding anything here,” she said. “We are in compliance. We’re done.”

Council has requested an in-camera (private) meeting with Thapar to discuss his future role with the city and council.

“Any open, public meeting I will attend,” he said, adding he questions the authority of council to impose the restrictions.

“I was elected by the public,” he said. “Not these people.”