

Time for Dick Gammick to go

Guest column

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Special to the Bonanza

This is a response to a guest column by Washoe County District Attorney Richard Gammick, published in the Bonanza on June 3. Mr. Gammick expresses his displeasure with “a few Incline Village residents” who hold him responsible for the county’s refusal to pay property tax refunds ordered by the courts. I am one of those Incline residents, and I suspect there may be thousands more who feel the same way as I do about Gammick and especially his handling of the property tax issue.

Attorney Gammick insists it is his ethical duty to represent his Washoe County government clients, such as the commissioners and the treasurer, not the citizens and taxpayers. Mr. Gammick should indeed be very familiar with the rules of ethics. Given the volume of complaints that have been contemplated or filed against him, he could single-handedly keep the Bar Association in business. I, for one, am relieved that Gammick does not represent me.

As for his duty, Gammick neglects to mention his fiduciary obligation to uphold the public interest, the Constitution and the laws of this state. This means he must defend his clients in a manner that does not abuse his authority or violate the rights of citizens. Attorney Gammick may not represent us, but he has sworn under oath to protect our constitutional rights, and as a public official

he is accountable to the citizens whom he supposedly serves.

It is ironic that Mr. Gammick would hide behind rules to justify his actions. Assessments in Incline Village and Crystal Bay have been declared unconstitutional by the Nevada Supreme Court. The laws and rules require the county to pay refunds. The district court has ordered the county to pay the refunds. Yet, under Gammick’s advice the county claims it only has to pay refunds when the Supreme Court specifically orders them to be paid.

I have watched District Attorney Gammick’s operation closely for many years. It is hard to describe in a few words what I and others have seen in this long battle — the dishonesty, the intimidation and harassment of county board members who agreed with the taxpayers, the manipulation of the property tax appeal process, the frivolous and preposterous legal arguments designed to stall and frustrate, the abuse of the justice system, the conspicuous arrogance and contempt for the rights of citizens and taxpayers.

Gammick would have us believe that all of this was either his “clients” doing or done in faithful representation of his “clients” interests. No doubt, the commissioners, the treasurer and others must share the blame for the county’s obscene and outrageous conduct. But there has never been any mystery as to who has been running the show.

Power corrupts, especially after too many years in office. It is time for Washoe County District Attorney Gammick to go.

Les Barta is an Incline Village resident and member of the Village League to Save Incline Assets.

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