

**CITY OF SWALEDALE
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December 30, 2022

To the residents of Swaledale:

In October, I wrote to you letting you know that the city council voted 3-1 (Darwin Hanson, Roger Myhre, Steve Watters – John Bonner) to reduce the hours and change the duties of the Public Works Director. In that letter, I told you that I would do my best to reduce the impact of these unnecessary actions. Unfortunately, there is really no way to limit the negative impact and the majority of council members continue to make it impossible to manage the town and provide what is expected from the city.

Marshal Polsdofer started with the city in 2019. Since that time, he has worked hard to not only do the job he was hired to do but also consistently gone above and beyond job expectations. As requested, he earned his water and wastewater certifications and has done his job well. Unfortunately, the city has received Marshal's resignation effective January 3, 2023. **I'd like to publicly thank Marshal for his service to the city.**

Melissa Simmons started with us in 2021 as a mentor to the clerk at that time. When that clerk resigned, Melissa agreed to take the position of city clerk. She is dual certified (Certified Municipal Clerk and Certified Municipal Finance Officer) and a mentor for the Iowa League of Cities. **Melissa has consistently ensured that the city has met all our various reporting requirements to the federal, state, and county governments and agencies. She has kept us on track and on budget in difficult times.** Unfortunately, the city has received the resignation of Melissa Simmons effective January 5, 2023. **I'd like to publicly thank Melissa for her service to the city.**

How did we get here? In the past year, a majority of the city council has made some very poor decisions that has drastically and negatively impacted the working conditions for these two employees. To say that it's unfortunate for a small town to lose highly qualified people in these two positions is an understatement. **Most cities would value employees like this but unfortunately, there are those on our current city council that put personalities and their own personal agendas ahead of professionalism and have made conditions unbearable for them to stay with us.**

In the past 20 years I've been your mayor, I haven't always agreed with city council decisions, and that's fine, but I've never seen council members treat our employees so poorly. That is unacceptable to me. Marshal told me that he **used to like it here and never would have started looking for other work if they hadn't treated him this way**, and Melissa stated in her

resignation letter that she has **never had to deal with the amount of stress and mistrust from the council that she has had in the last 6 months in Swaledale.** No one can blame either of them for leaving and I wish them both the best in their careers. **They have served us well.**

Those responsible for these poor decisions claim to be wanting to save the city money but these types of actions will cost the taxpayers greatly. Just as one example, losing Marshal will mean that the city now needs to hire a new maintenance person, and we will also need to contract with a DNR certified water and wastewater affidavit operator and pay him or her a monthly rate, generally in the range of \$600-\$800 per month, in addition to what the city will need to pay the general maintenance person. In the end, this will cost the city taxpayers much more.

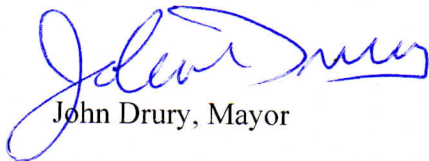
It has been an honor to serve you as mayor and I don't make this next decision lightly and without a lot of thought. With a majority of the city council willing to put their own personal agendas ahead of anything else, that doesn't appreciate the value of highly qualified employees, and doesn't even understand the basic role of local government, I find myself without the necessary resources to effectively manage the city in the manner you expect and deserve. Therefore, I see no other choice but to resign my position as Mayor effective January 3, 2023.

It's no secret that cities our size risk unincorporating and we are no different. There are those on the council that believe that services will be there like they are now but will be "run by the county." **Nothing could be farther from the truth. If we were to unincorporate, we lose our post office, we lose our library, and we would lose our fire dept.** In the winter, the streets would be plowed by the county whenever they get to them, and water rates would be decided at the county level, with little to no public input from those most affected. **With a council that makes these types of decisions, treats good employees unfairly, and willingly violates the Open Meetings Law to accomplish their goals, we will undoubtedly face unincorporating.** I've heard from very few in town that think this would be a good idea.

In closing, it's my suggestion that you contact your council members immediately and demand they start making decisions that are in the best interests of the city, as opposed to catering to a few people that don't value good employees, and simply don't understand local government and how it's supposed to work.

There's a lot at stake here and we deserve better.

Sincerely,



John Drury, Mayor