


CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE MEMORANDUM
#13-2024

DATE: May 1, 2024
TO: Honorable Mayor Meredith Leighty and City Council Members
FROM: Heather Geyer, City Manager 
SUBJECT: CR-98 – Ethics Complaint Against Senator Faith Winter

PURPOSE

To consider CR-98, a resolution authorizing the filing of a formal ethics complaint against Senator Faith Winter.

BACKGROUND

On April 3, 2024, at a community meeting hosted by the City and attended by the City Council focused on the siting of a Mental health Transitional Living Facility in the City. Colorado State Senator Faith Winter appeared to be intoxicated while sitting on a panel of the State and local officials answering questions from the community on the decision making that led to the siting. After the meeting ended, individuals suggested Senator Winter find a ride home instead of driving. Shortly thereafter, local news sources indicated that Senator Winter intended to enter rehab for alcohol abuse.

On Monday, April 22, 2024, City Council member Nicholas Walker requested Council consensus for City Attorney Corey Hoffmann to evaluate the process for filing an ethics complaint about Senator Winter's behavior with the appropriate authority. Council requested a special meeting to consider the ethics complaint. The 2024 Legislative Session is scheduled to end on May 8, 2024.

As a result of the City Council direction on April 22, 2024, the attached resolution is being presented for Council's consideration. If approved, it would authorize the filing of the Ethics Complaint against Senator Winter.

BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS

There are no time or budget implications for the City at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Council provide direction on approval of CR-98, a resolution that, if approved, would authorize the Mayor sign a letter filing an ethics complaint against Senator Winter.

STAFF REFERENCE

If Council Members have any questions, please contact Heather Geyer, City Manager, at hgeyer@northglenn.org or 303.450.8706.

CR-98 – Ethics Complaint Against Senator Faith Winter

SPONSORED BY: MAYOR LEIGHTY

COUNCIL MEMBER'S RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO.

No. CR-98
Series of 2024

Series of 2024

A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN ETHICS COMPLAINT AGAINST STATE SENATOR FAITH WINTER BASED ON HER CONDUCT AT THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN COMMUNITY MEETING DATED APRIL 3, 2024

WHEREAS, on April 3, 2024, the City held a community meeting (the "Meeting") to discuss the siting of a Mental Health Transitional Living Facility (the "MHTL Facility") in the City, and invited State Senator Faith Winter ("Senator Winter") as the Senate representative for the majority of the City and the sponsor of HB22-1303 to participate in the Meeting;

WHEREAS, Senator Winter arrived at the Meeting late, and various individuals indicated Senator Winter appeared to have glassy eyes, slurred speech, and some individuals smelled alcohol on her breath, and as a result she also appeared at various times disinterested, annoyed, and combative;

WHEREAS, thereafter Senator Winter publicly indicated she intended to enter rehab for alcohol addiction;

WHEREAS, while the City Council is sensitive to the disease of alcoholism, such a disease does not provide an excuse for Senator Winter's conduct of showing up at a community meeting in an apparently inebriated state;

WHEREAS, Senator Winter conduct as the elected representative of the City's constituents undermined the integrity of her office as a Senator representing the constituents of the City, and demonstrated an inability to perform her legislative duties in a manner that promotes public confidence; and

WHEREAS, the City Council therefore determines that it has no choice but to authorize the Mayor to submit the attached Ethics Complaint on behalf of the City Council to Colorado State Senate President Steve Fenberg under Rule 43 of the Colorado Senate Rules.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NORTHGLENN, COLORADO, THAT:

Section 1. The City Council hereby designates authorizes the filing of the Ethics Complaint attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**, and incorporated herein by this reference, regarding the conduct of State Senator Faith Winter at the April 3, 2024, community meeting to Colorado State Senate President Steve Fenberg under the Colorado Senate Rules.

DATED, at Northglenn, Colorado, this _____ day of _____, 2024.

MEREDITH LEIGHTY
Mayor

ATTEST:

JOHANNA SMALL, MMC
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

COREY Y. HOFFMANN
City Attorney

EXHIBIT 1



Meredith Leighty
Mayor
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May 1, 2024

Colorado State Senate
Senate President Steve Fenberg
200 E. Colfax, Room 346
Denver, CO 80203

Dear President Fenberg,

Please let this correspondence serve as a formal complaint against Senator Faith Winter filed on behalf of the City of Northglenn City Council for violating Rule 41, specifically 41(a.5), of the Colorado Senate Rules (the "Rules"). This complaint is being filed pursuant to Rule 43, which requires the signed, written complaint be filed with the Senate President.

Background and Facts

On April 3, 2024, the City Council held a special community meeting (the "Meeting") to discuss the siting of a Mental Health Transitional Living Facility (the "MHTL Facility") in the City.

As has been well documented in the media, Senator Winter appeared at the community meeting that was attended by between 300 and 400 community members, as well as the entire Northglenn City Council and other state and local elected officials, and Senator Winter appeared disoriented at best at the Meeting. Throughout the public comment period, for which [video is available](#), she appeared at various times, disinterested, annoyed, and combative, to the point where others had to intervene to cool tensions. In one notable example, she simply refused to answer one of my direct questions. She also appeared to have glassy eyes, slurred speech, and some individuals smelled alcohol on her breath. After the meeting, multiple news sources indicated she was unable to drive herself home, and that she intended to enter rehab for alcohol addiction. Marianne Goodland, *Colorado Senator Faith Winter to seek treatment for alcohol use, checking in to rehab*, COLORADO POLITICS (Apr. 4, 2024).

Senator Winter is the Senate representative for the vast majority of the City. While the City is sensitive to the disease of alcoholism, there is simply no excuse for showing up to a community meeting under the influence of alcohol. From the City Council's perspective, this is at a minimum a dereliction of her legislative duties under Rule 41(a.5) as set forth below.

Charge

Rule 41(a.5) states the following on Senate standards for legislative ethics and official conduct:

Legislative office is a trust to be performed with **integrity in the public interest**. A member is to **be respectful of the confidence placed in that member** by the other members of the Senate and **by the people of the state of Colorado**. **A**

Colorado State Senate
Senate President Steve Fenberg
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member shall respect and comply with the law and shall **perform his or her legislative duties at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity** and independence of the Senate and of the General Assembly. **By personal example** and by admonition to colleagues whose behavior may threaten the honor and integrity of the lawmaking body, **the member shall watchfully guard the responsibilities of the public office and the responsibilities and duties placed on the member by the Senate.** To this end, **each member shall be accountable to the Senate** for violations of the Rules of the Senate, the Joint Rules of the Senate and the House of Representatives, the Constitution of the state of Colorado, or any provision of the code of ethics set forth in article 18 of title 24, Colorado Revised Statutes.

Colorado Senate Rule 41(a.5) (emphasis added).

As outlined in the background and facts, and evidenced by video record of the entire meeting, the City Council of the City of Northglenn alleges the following based on her conduct at the April 3, 2024 community meeting:

- Senator Winter has failed to uphold her office with integrity in the public interest;
- Senator Winter was disrespectful to her constituents and the people of the State of Colorado, as well as to herself;
- Senator Winter lost confidence from the public, most damagingly from her own constituents that elected her to office; and
- Senator Winter has failed to watchfully guard the responsibilities of the public office and the responsibilities and duties placed on her as a member of the Senate.

This charge is filed by the City Council because the City still believes she must, as all members of the General Assembly must, be held accountable for her behavior and conduct. Accordingly, the City respectfully requests you convene a Senate Committee on Ethics pursuant to Rule 43 to address this matter.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Meredith Leighty
Mayor