Edited version

Armed, Anonymous, anonymous, and Unaccountable unaccountable

A few months ago, the Press ignored documentation showing the Citycity of Mahtomedi failed to enforce its contracts and ordinances. Instead, the paper catered to various special interest groups while leaving much of the truth on the cutting room floor. Former editor Neutkens' data practices story was biased and unfairly represented the situation. This was underpinned by Loretta Harding's previous writing on deer management, whose conflict of interest in culling should have ethically precluded her from covering the issue.

It's quite chilling when the front page is used as a cudgel to silence civic engagement and government accountability.

I filed a data request to examine Mahtomedi's deer management. The names of hunters became a specific focus when it became clear that Mahtomedi—against the terms of its contract—didn't have forms, names, or certificates of liability insurance. Are you comfortable with the city not knowing the legal identities of those contracted?

Rep. Becker-Finn's care to make names of armed government workers anonymous belies her legislation to make more police data public. Apparently, she cares if hunters quit culling, but not when officers quit protecting? It was especially concerning when the council tried to block this public information and Metro Bowhunters (who "aren't trophy hunters") tried to classify their services as "recreational." They claim to obey game laws, but what about other laws? Seven months later, they still have not provided non-profit public disclosures.

Requests showed substantial problems with Mahtomedi's records management. The city clerk provided false statements. Other data was incomplete and inconsistent. The city didn't research anything beyond hunting, which studies show is an ineffective long-term strategy. There were no reports of CWD testing, proof of sharpshooting certification, venison donations to the needy, or natural ecological damage caused by deer—just complaints about nibbled landscaping. There was misinformation about deer and Lyme's disease, and abysmal enforcement of deer feeders when Goebel (public works director) said there were too many to count, some hundreds of pounds in size.

At least Stevens Point's culling program provides complete transparency. What about Mahtomedi?

I will be publishing detailed reports of these failures on my website. Citizens should know and demand accountability.

<u>Chris DeWuske</u> Mahtomedi

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