

FINDINGS OF FACT , CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SHAWANO COUNTY ETHICS COMMITTEE

IN RE: ETHICS COMPLAINTS FILED AGAINST LOWELL HAMMETT, SHAWNO COUNTY SUPERVISOR

FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSION OF LAW

This matter having come before the Shawano County Ethics Committee for a determination on the complaints filed against Lowell Hammett in his role as a County Supervisor (herein after referred to as the Respondent) by the then County Administrative Coordinator James Davel and then County Clerk Kara Skarlupka (herein after referred to as the Complainants) and the Commission having considered the evidence presented during the investigation including three separate investigative meetings and a public hearing as requested by the Respondent, now makes the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law.

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

The Commission finds by clear and convincing evidence the following material facts to be true based on the evidence in the record:

1. The Respondent did print, publish and distribute a business card promoting his business that also included a specific notation of his position as a Shawano County Supervisor.
2. There was no proof of substantial business gain as a result of this unauthorized distribution but there was evidence to determine that the distribution would by its very nature have the effect of promoting his business in concert with his role as a County Supervisor suggesting that there would be a connection.
3. The Respondent did additionally in the use of social media attempt to use his position as a county supervisor for personal gain.
4. The Respondent improperly attempted to utilized his position as a supervisor to circumvent County Board rules by trying to set up a special board meeting when he knew that he had no authority to set up a meeting.
5. The Respondent attempted to reserve a room with the County Clerk which he knew he has no authority to do and then compounded the situation by suggesting that the County Clerk had violated her duties when in fact she was following her duties.
6. The Respondent did disseminate emails to other County Board supervisors asking them to vote in a certain manner supporting his position which amounted to a potential open meetings violation if the issue had ever come before the Board. These emails were distributed after the Respondent had been told that he had no authority to call a meeting or to even attempt to solicit a vote for a special meeting.

7. The Respondent did intentionally use and disclose information he gained through his board position in a way to distort facts and make himself look good while causing harm to others involved in county government.
8. The Respondent did use his position to his personal self-promotion while attempting to injury the reputation of others and cause them harm.
9. The Respondent used his role as a County Board Supervisor to violate the duty of loyalty that he had to the Shawano County Board and to the Shawano county employees through personal attacks on Board Members and on specific county employees.
10. The Respondent did breach his duty of confidentiality by improperly using confidential information and by violating an agreement he had with at least with one county employee not to disclose information without her permission.
11. The Respondent has improperly engaged in distribution of confidential information to the news media and to the public in social media.
12. The Respondent failed to follow proper procedures regarding employee complaints and then alleged unfounded conspiracy theories to justify his actions all to the detriment of the image of the Shawano County staff and Board of Supervisors.
13. The Respondent through his actions, unfounded accusations, and unprofessional conduct has brought about unnecessary discord and disrespect for the Shawano County Board Supervisors and the professional county staff.
14. The Respondent did by his actions breach his common law duty of Good Faith and Honesty in his public statements and the dissemination of malicious materials that should have if true been dealt with differently and instead were dealt with by him as he saw fit in his personal crusade to injure the reputation of county employees, elected officials and County Board members.

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Commission concludes the following regarding the application of Wisconsin law:

1. The Shawano County Ethics Committee has jurisdiction over the Respondent and the subject matter of this case.
2. Wisconsin Statute § 19.59 states that a public official shall not use their office to obtain a private benefit.
3. The Respondent is a "state public official".
4. By engaging in the conduct described in the about stated Findings of Fact.
5. The Respondent based on those finds did:
 - a. Violate state ethics laws
 - b. Violate Shawano County Ethic Code Ordinances

c. Breached his common law fiduciary duty to the County Board, the County elected Officials, and the County Staff.

III. RECOMMENDATION:

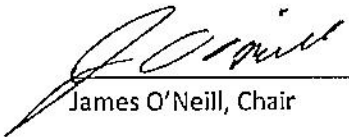
NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RECOMMENDED:

1. That the Respondent apologize to the staff members that he falsely accused.
2. That the County Board Chair remove the Respondent from the Ethics Committee.
3. That the County Board take such action as is necessary to remove the Respondent from the Shawano County Board.

Decided on the 11th day of November, 2025

BY THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE SHAWANO COUNTY ETHICS COMMITTEE;

Signed this 13 day of November, 2025


James O'Neill, Chair