



RIVER VALLEY LAW
THE LAW OFFICE OF SARAH JEWELL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 7, 2023

CONTACT: SARAH R. JEWELL
Tel. (320) 497-7977
Email: sjewell@rivervalleylaw.com

FORMER FAIR MEADOW NURSING HOME AND ASSISTED LIVING ADMINISTRATOR, ANGELA LEITING, FILES SUIT AGAINST CITY OF FERTILE, ITS MAYOR, DANIEL WILKENS, AND FAIR MEADOW NURSING HOME AND ASSISTED LIVING, ALLEGING SHE WAS UNJUSTLY FIRED FROM HER LONG-TERM ROLE AS THE NURSING HOME’S ADMINISTRATOR.

The result of the lawsuit could determine whether the Mayor and other City officials wrongfully held closed session City Council meetings to “poll” for votes from Council members on firing Ms. Leiting and could determine whether Ms. Leiting was wrongfully fired and whether she should be re-instated to her former position and paid her lost wages and benefits.

Shortly after her termination, Ms. Leiting was shocked at being handed a “No Trespassing” notice, to keep her off the Nursing Home property, “until further notice” – when the City was aware that her own mother-in-law is a resident of Fair Meadow Nursing Home and Assisted Living.

While that trespassing notice was later revoked after much public outcry, the City decided to keep its “Cease and Desist” notice against Ms. Leiting in full force and effect, attempting to restrict who she may talk to while at the Nursing Home. The “Cease and Desist” notice is also being challenged in the legal action. Ms. Leiting did not choose this legal path lightly, but after obtaining recordings of some of the City’s closed session meetings held earlier in 2023, Ms. Leiting better understood what had been happening behind closed doors.

1. Ms. Leiting alleges that, when referring to specific employees, at the City of Fertile’s January 2023, closed meeting, Mayor Wilkens said, ‘If Angie was gone, that problem would go.’
2. Ms. Leiting alleges that the City Council was told by the Mayor and others that Ms. Leiting “babies” her staff and that she was just “too nice” and “not strong enough.”
3. Ms. Leiting alleges that when Council held a closed session if the recordings from closed meetings could be heard, the Mayor said, ‘They don’t know.’
4. Ms. Leiting alleges that the City Administrator, Lisa Liden, performed an investigation at the City Council’s instruction in a manner that was grossly exaggerated, incorrect, or just plain false. Ms. Leiting believes that the City Council based their decision to terminate her employment, in part, on the incorrect and false information.

5. Ms. Leiting alleges that lies were told about how federal Covid funds were spent at the Nursing Home, and that there were very serious, slanderous statements made about her, such as falsely accusing Ms. Leiting of “theft” for vacation hours.
6. Ms. Leiting alleges that the largest falsehood made about her was an inaccurate statement made about the requirements of nursing staff at the Assisted Living facility, where the City accused Ms. Leiting of “misappropriation of funds” - when in fact, the City Administrator pulled the wrong statute and did not know what she was talking about.
7. Ms. Leiting believes that Mayor Wilkens was dissatisfied, because she was supposed to “Nail [a specific Nursing Home employee] to the cross” and Ms. Leiting didn’t, as it was her role to supervise the staff and employees at the Nursing home as part of her job as the Administrator, not the Mayor’s personal job.
8. Ms. Leiting is aware that a City Council member acknowledged that the “Cease and Desist” notice was a “Cover your ass” move, with no council member citing resident safety for its purpose. Rather, the stated purpose of the “Cease and Desist” was because Ms. Leiting “had keys and had power.”
9. Ms. Leiting alleges that the Mayor and the City labeled her and five (5) Nursing Home Management positions as the “Good Ole Girls Club.”
10. Ms. Leiting is aware that City officials stated that selling the Fair Meadows Nursing Home is “Not off the table.”
11. Ms. Leiting alleges that she was referred to by City officials, as being “one head of a two-headed snake” and that they [the City] will “take segments after the hit.”
12. Ms. Leiting is aware that the City Administrator, Lisa Liden, commented, ‘I’m working for the City and the Nursing Home, so I should be paid more than Angie ever was’ - when she was asked what she’d like to be compensated for her services as the ‘interim’ Nursing Home Administrator after firing Ms. Leiting.

Ms. Leiting wants the community to know that resident care was always her #1 priority - that having a happy staff, equals a happy life for residents. Ms. Leiting had to operate the Nursing Home under the City Council’s budget and did a great job with what she was provided. Ms. Leiting’s first and foremost concern remains the residents and their families. The impact of the City Council’s choices greatly affects the lives of many people.

Ms. Leiting humbly thanks all of the people behind the “We Stand with Angie Movement”. She appreciates how much the community stands behind her and is encouraged that you see all the good she has done over the years for the residents, for their families, and for the staff. Ms. Leiting is proud of the employees at Fair Meadow Nursing Home, as they continue to move forward with excellent resident care despite the way this termination occurred.

Ms. Leiting hopes that everyone in the community will keep fighting to ensure resident care doesn’t falter. She hopes the community will continue to advocate not to reduce the budget of Nursing Home – or on programs that support resident’s emotional wellbeing, as a way to address the City’s budget concerns. Ms. Leiting encourages the community to advocate for government transparency, and to support Fair Meadow Nursing Home in a respectful manner and be the example of leadership that the City of Fertile needs.