

RYAN: Tensions have existed between neighbors for months

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ongoing beef between Kane and Ryan and his wife over a dog bite Kane suffered from the Ryan's German Pinscher last February.

Kane said she was "shaken" by the incident and told *The Nugget* that she posted it on the Sisters Political Forum & Cocktail Hour Facebook page because she felt bullied.

"The purpose and intent was — I'm being bullied and I'm going to stand up to the bully," she said. "Because what other recourse do I have?"

Ryan expressed regret over the incident, but told *The Nugget* that he had "reached a boiling point" with an ongoing issue with Kane where he says his wife has been badgered and harassed over the dog-bite incident.

"Everybody has a boiling point," he said. "Yes, I'm the mayor, but I'm also human. Am I proud of what I did? No. Did I do it as the mayor? No. I never gave a thought to the mayor situation, just so you know."

"The mayor situation" is what made the behavior on the video an issue — and the behavior on display caused local resident Patty Schild to call Ryan that same evening. She said she wanted to understand Ryan's conduct rather than talking about it on Facebook. She told *The*

Nugget that she was taken aback by Ryan's response.

"He said he has a lawyer and he's going to 'sue my ass' as an accomplice to the lady who posted the video," Schild said.

She said that Ryan did not really let her speak and hung up on her.

"I then had a very negative impression of our mayor," she said.

Ryan denied using any profanity, but acknowledged that he probably had threatened to sue the caller.

"I did not use profanity," he said. "I said you have no right to call me like this. I had no idea I was being videotaped. I was pretty worked up. I'm at my boiling point."

Schild argues that she did, in fact, have a right to call Ryan and that doing so was completely appropriate.

"It was a courtesy and out of respect, even though I had concerns about his behavior. This is what we're supposed to do (regarding actions by a public official) is to call him if we have concerns or questions," she said.

Ryan told *The Nugget* that he realizes that he is always the mayor, even when not engaged in City business, and that his actions reflect on the community he leads.

"The last thing I want to do is bring negativity to the City," he said. "I completely understand that. I have remorse for that piece of it."

He also said that he "has remorse" for his handling of the conversation with Schild.

"She caught me at a bad time," he said. "I would

definitely take that back."

And, according to Schild, he did.

She posted on Facebook on Sunday, July 21, that "Mayor Ryan left a voice mail on my phone today apologizing for the way he treated me on the telephone a few days ago. His explanation was that he had reached a boiling point in the situation with the neighbor who made the video of him; and he thought I was a friend of hers calling on her behalf. He stated he was not thinking as the mayor at that moment. I accept the apology and I am personally done with the situation. Hopefully, lessons were learned throughout this ordeal and behavior changes in the future towards anyone else who takes the time to call our mayor to discuss a concern or ask questions."

The City of Sisters offered a muted response to the contretemps, stating that, "The City of Sisters staff and volunteers strive to be professional, fair and civil in all of our interactions with the public. We have become aware of a personal dispute between the mayor and a neighbor. This dispute, although unfortunate and made public, is a personal matter between two private parties. The City understands the community's concern about this issue and welcomes

input on improving our relationship with the citizens of Sisters."

Several people have made comments to the effect that new City Manager Brant Kucera should take some action in the matter. However, the City Manager works for the City Council, not the other way around, and it is the council's responsibility — and ultimately the citizens' — to address the actions of elected officials.

Council President Nancy Connolly provided *The Nugget* with an individual statement:

"As elected officials we are held to a higher standard of behavior than the general public, 24 hours a day, on public or private land. The mayor's alleged actions do not reflect the values of council, city staff, or other city volunteers. This is a teachable moment for the mayor and the community at large regarding treating all people with dignity, respect and civility in any situation. I do not condone this behavior."

Ryan told *The Nugget* he intends to acknowledge at Wednesday's City Council meeting that he "should have been thinking more about Sisters and my mayoral role and approached things more professionally."

However, he is adamant in

arguing that his actions were provoked by months of "libel and slander" in the wake of the dog-bite incident.

For her part, Kane says she's never lied about the dog and denies badgering or harassing Ryan or his wife — and says that the opposite has been the case. She said that she initially acquiesced to Lidia Ryan's request that she not report the bite to police, but changed her mind because she felt that the dog needed to have a paper trail.

"They're going to say I've harassed them for months — but I was the one who was bit," she said. "I'm the victim here. And from the beginning — 'don't call the police' — it's been about them."

It is a Class A misdemeanor to record audio of a person without their knowledge and Kane was cited on Monday. She told *The Nugget* that she did inform Ryan that she was recording.

Ryan appears to desire to continue as Sisters mayor, despite online calls for his resignation or removal. The City Council appears prepared to accept Ryan's acknowledgement that his behavior was unacceptable and move on. Whether the underlying neighborhood dispute can be resolved remains to be seen.



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