

# Censure

Continued from Page 1A

"I, too, have reservations when council members undermine the majority vote of the council," Masters said.

Masters said if the council is going to have rules of conduct, there need to be consequences for someone who decides to not follow on repeated occasions. He then made a motion to censure Hontos; Conway seconded the motion.

"It's time. Enough is enough," Masters said.

In his rebuttal, Hontos cited rule No. 7, which states members do not belittle minority opinions and votes. He also cited his First Amendment rights and proceeded to read the letter to the editor out loud.

"The more we talk about this, the more amusing it is to me. Really, it's a joke," said Hontos, who later added, "If I don't like something, I'm going to air my opinion about it."

Council member Carol Lewis then said there are parameters to free speech given he is an elected official.

"You've belittled the people who have voted in favor and taken away the right of the majority to rule. That's not how these things work," Lewis said. "Once you are seated as a council member, there are expectations. ... You do not have absolute rights."

Conway said council members are "not private citizens. We are representing the city of St. Cloud."

Council member Steve Laraway agreed, noting he has been involved with many for-profit and nonprofit

boards. On all of the boards, he said, after a vote was cast, the members come together to support the majority decision.

"We need to remember that we're all working together for the big picture," Laraway said.

Masters then called the question to vote on censuring Hontos. City Administrator Matt Staehling clarified that a censure is "simply a public rebuke of behavior."

The council members, with the exception of Hontos, voted on private ballots. City Clerk Seth Kaufman then read the vote total. How each member voted was not made public.

Hontos left the council chambers as Kaufman was reading the vote.

## The letter to the editor

Hontos' letter addressed recent changes the council made to its rules of order. At the end of the letter, he urged council members to "take the time to poll their constituents on upcoming issues and think them through before casting votes that exclude community and council member input."

The council changed the format of the open forum – where community members can address the council – following long and sometimes-controversial comments regarding immigration and refugee resettlement at meetings in 2017.

At the time, the council's rules of order allowed residents to speak at open forums for two minutes on topics not on the agenda.

Now the council's rules of order allows five speakers to address the city

and council for three minutes. Speakers are limited to the first five St. Cloud residents who sign up; nonresidents may address the council only when there are not five St. Cloud residents participating in the open forum. If time permits after registered speakers have spoken, the council president can allow unregistered speakers to participate.

In August, the council approved moving the open forum to the end of the meeting after adjournment and the addition of another rule that better defines how the council can bring up topics during the "open discussion and announcements" part of the meeting.

Following the change, the open forum is no longer televised, according to Staehling. Council minutes recorded since the change do not include the public comments.

"The new rule adopted now requires the council meeting to adjourn first, turn off the camera and then have the speakers come before the council," Hontos wrote about the change in his letter to the Times. "In other words, the only way the public can now hear these individuals speak is if you are physically present in the city council chambers. All others will not be able to hear what these people are talking about. In my opinion this is an attack on the public's right to be heard."

The new rule – Rule 19 – states council members can make announcements during open discussion. "New items of business may also be raised, briefly described, and placed on a future agenda for discussion upon a majority vote of the Council," the amended rules state.

Staehling said there is no limit to what a council member can bring up.

However, a new item of business will only be placed on a future agenda with a majority vote. The change, he said, is consistent with Robert's Rules of Order, which is the standard for facilitating discussions and group decision-making.

"The five council members who voted to make this change have now put restrictions and limitations on individual council members," Hontos stated in his letter to the Times. "What are they afraid of? We were not elected to show up on Monday nights and nod our heads saying yes to everything the administration brings forward."

## How often does this happen?

City councils in surrounding communities have censured elected officials in recent years – but it's not common.

In December, Rockville City Council censured Mayor Duane Willenbring after the council claimed Willenbring overstepped his authority as an elected official.

According to a resolution passed by the council, Willenbring was doing unauthorized maintenance at the Rockville Fire Hall when he engaged in "unprofessional conversation/interaction with Gold Cross paramedics."

Becker City Council censured Mayor Jerome "Lefty" Kleis in 2013 and 2016 for what council members said were harassing interactions with city staff that violate the city's code of conduct.

Kleis then sued the city, accusing them of violating his free speech rights. The city's motion to dismiss was eventually granted.

# Dying

Continued from Page 1A

clinical trial. But she also knows that the five-year survival rate is low at her advanced stage.

"I'm in year four," she said.

Also testifying will be Barbara Coombs Lee, who helped draft Oregon's law in the 1990s. She said it has led to a major improvement in end-of-life care there, while fears about abuse and coercion have not come true. A third of the patients who obtain the drugs die without choosing to use them, she said.

"People who want to access medical aid in dying in their terminal illness aren't making a decision to die," said Coombs Lee, president of Compassion & Choices. "Their disease is taking their

life. They have no choice about living or dying. Their death is imminent, and above all what they would like is some control over the timing of that death and how much suffering they're made to bear before that death arrives."

According to the Oregon Health Authority, 249 people obtained prescriptions under the state's law in 2018. As of Jan. 22 this year, 168 of them had died after taking the prescribed drugs, including 11 who had received them in previous years. Of those who were prescribed the drugs, 79% were aged 65 or older and 63% had cancer.

The long-term trend has been upward. As of Jan. 22, 2,217 prescriptions had been written since the law took effect, and 1,459 people, or two-thirds of them, died from the drugs.

The practice is often referred to as physician-assisted suicide, a term that

Coombs Lee considers offensive. She said her group prefers "medical aid in dying" because the patient takes the drugs themselves and thus remains in control. She said they believe the word suicide implies an irrational choice.

The opposition in Minnesota is led by the Minnesota Alliance for Ethical Healthcare, an umbrella group that includes the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the voice of the state's Catholic bishops, and Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life, the state's largest anti-abortion group. The coalition argues that government should promote better treatment and pain management instead.

While the bill is getting an informational hearing in a House committee that won't take a vote, its prospects after that are uncertain. Its chief sponsor, Rep. Mike Freiberg, hopes for a formal

hearing in the 2020 session. The Golden Valley Democrat acknowledged that some colleagues in the House Democratic majority may have problems with the proposal. And he concedes the chances are poor in the GOP-controlled Senate. But he said supporters want to get the discussion going.

The opponents include one of the Senate's top Democrats, Minority Whip John Hoffman of Champlin, who plans to testify against the bill. He said he doesn't think it will get a Senate hearing at all. He said he fears that vulnerable elderly and disabled people could come under pressure to choose to end their lives once insurers with their eyes on the bottom line and health care bureaucrats become involved.

"I think people with disabilities should be pretty concerned," Hoffman said.



**ST. CLOUD AREA CAREER FAIR**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2019**  
**2:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

River's Edge Convention Center  
Terry Haws Center C Room  
10 South 4th Avenue | St. Cloud, MN 56301

[mn.gov/deed/stc](http://mn.gov/deed/stc)

NO COST TO JOB SEEKERS,  
NO NEED TO REGISTER  
JUST BRING YOUR RESUME!




**Help Us Build Strong Communities**

Duininck is now accepting applications

**Field and/or Shop Technician**

Duininck Companies LLC is a family-run company founded in 1926, and now in its third generation. Duinick Companies continues to expand and grow, and we are actively seeking a Field & Shop Technician to join our team! The primary function of the position will be to diagnose and repair all heavy construction equipment on different job sites or in the shop. This individual must be flexible and open to traveling to different job sites throughout Minnesota and surrounding states.

Essential duties include operating and inspecting construction equipment to determine needed repairs, communicating with supervisors and then making such repairs. For a full description of responsibilities please see [www.duininck.com](http://www.duininck.com). We offer competitive pay based on experience and a full range of benefits!

**Contact us to learn more about opportunities to join our team**

phone **320-978-6011** web [duinick.com](http://duinick.com)



Duininck is an EEO/AA/M/F/Vet/Disability Employer



**Help Us Build Strong Communities**

Duininck is now accepting applications

**Truck Drivers**

Duininck Companies LLC is a family-run company founded in 1926, and now in its third generation. Duinick Companies continues to expand and grow, and we are actively seeking drivers of semi belly dump, tri-pump, end dump, flatbed, tandem, lowboy and quad dump trucks to join our team! As a Truck Driver you will be responsible for transporting dirt, aggregate, asphalt, hot mix and/or equipment to job site locations.

Essential duties include safely operating a truck to deliver equipment or materials, securing loads for transport in compliance with safety regulations and company policies, assisting with loading and unloading, performing inspections, completing documentation and more. For a full description go to see [www.duininck.com](http://www.duininck.com). We offer competitive pay based on experience and a full range of benefits!

**Contact us to learn more about opportunities to join our team**

phone **320-978-6011** web [duinick.com](http://duinick.com)



Duininck is an EEO/AA/M/F/Vet/Disability Employer

CT-GC0263575-01

**FALL 2019**

**TOUR OF HOMES**

CENTRAL MINNESOTA BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

**SEPT 13-15 & SEPT 20-22**

**HOMES OPEN**

FRI. 4:30 - 7:00 • SAT. & SUN. 12:00 - 5:00

**22 HOMES • 15 BUILDERS**

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

**CMBA**

CENTRAL MINNESOTA BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

GUIDES AVAILABLE AT:







[cmbafour.com](http://cmbafour.com) Coming Soon