

Dear Mr. Goodrich and Members of the Republican Party Executive Committee:

After more than 30 years of service in the Uintah County Treasurer's Office, including 20 years as Treasurer, I feel obligated to speak plainly regarding the selection of my replacement.

I am extremely disappointed that the Executive Committee did not seek my input regarding the qualifications necessary to operate this office. I respected the party's process and did not interfere. However, after the selection of Mark Caldwell, followed by the withdrawal of his name because additional concerns required investigation, I can no longer remain silent.

I strongly oppose the appointment of Mark Caldwell as Uintah County Treasurer.

The Treasurer is entrusted with safeguarding public funds and must exercise sound financial judgment, understand the legal authority of the office, and maintain the confidence of both county employees and the public.

During Mr. Caldwell's previous employment with Uintah County as budget officer, I had serious concerns regarding his financial judgment and his understanding of the boundaries between his position and the statutory authority of the Treasurer. These were not minor personality disagreements. They involved significant financial decisions, attempts to exercise authority that I believed belonged exclusively to the Treasurer, and other actions that created substantial conflict within county government.

One significant example involved Mr. Caldwell advocating for the early payoff of a low-interest public safety bond before the bonds were callable. I strongly opposed that decision because the county had the opportunity to continue earning substantially more interest on those funds than it was paying on the debt. Paying the bond early resulted in the county losing the opportunity to earn millions of dollars in interest revenue. Mr. Caldwell also attempted to have the bank wire the funds despite my objection that he did not have the authority to direct those funds and that such authority rested with the Treasurer.

In another instance, Mr. Caldwell cut a county department's budget in half without the department's knowledge and without the proper documentation. Actions involving public funds and departmental budgets require transparency, proper

authority, and sound financial judgment. These experiences are directly relevant when considering whether someone should be entrusted with the responsibilities of County Treasurer.

I am also troubled by the apparent emphasis on political platform issues in the selection process. The Treasurer does not establish tax rates or county budgets. The Treasurer's responsibility is to collect, safeguard, manage, and distribute public funds according to law. The qualifications for this appointment should reflect the actual responsibilities of the office, not unrelated political issues.

This appointment should not be influenced by disagreements involving Mike Wilkins, County Commissioners, or other political disputes. Appointing a Treasurer to make a political statement or settle past disagreements would be irresponsible and would place the stability of the Treasurer's Office at risk.

There are other qualified candidates, including Caleb Hall and Koy Nielsen, who deserve serious consideration. The committee should select the individual best prepared to maintain the stability, integrity, and proper operation of this office.

After dedicating more than three decades of my life to Uintah County, I do not make this request lightly. I respectfully but strongly urge the Executive Committee to reconsider its decision and not appoint Mark Caldwell as Uintah County Treasurer.

This decision should be based on one question: Who is best qualified to protect the financial interests of Uintah County and its citizens?

I ask each of you to put personal and political disagreements aside and make that decision accordingly.

Respectfully,

Wendi Long

Uintah County Treasurer