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Elsner resigns post as Treasurer for Colorado Republican Party

Elsner: "I have absolutely no regrets."

By Kelly R. Kirkpatrick Editor

Oct 27, 2022

Park County District 2 Commissioner Richard Elsner resigned his post as Treasurer for the Colorado Republican Party Oct. 24.

Elsner says he was asked to provide his resignation by Kristi Burton Brown, Chairwoman for that organization, and that he did so shortly after the request was made.

Brown's request came as a result of Elsner's public endorsement of Ashley Girordo, a Democratic candidate for the District 3 Commissioner's post in Park County. Elsner has been vocal in his support for Girodo in recent weeks, and submitted a letter to the editor in last week's edition of The Flume which outlined his reasons for favoring Girodo over Republican candidate Dave Wissel.



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That public support was a violation of GOP bylaws, which prohibit party officers from publically supporting non-Republican candidates.

Elsner was asked how he felt following the submission of his resignation, and whether he regretted his public support for Girodo.

“I feel great, and I have absolutely no regrets,” Elsner said in an Oct. 24 interview. “I believe Ashley represents the best option in the District 3 Commissioners race. Looking out for Park County comes first, and in this case the quality of candidates trumps political party affiliations. So, politics be damned.”

Elsner also said he anticipated blowback for openly supporting a Democratic candidate, and that he was fully aware of GOP bylaws forbidding him from doing so.

“I expected to hear from the state, and was not surprised when asked to resign,” Elsner added.

Elsner also provided his resignation letter to The Flume for publication, which is printed below in its entirety.

Kristi Burton Brown,

As requested please consider this my letter of resignation as treasurer of the Colorado Republican Party.

I find it difficult to believe that the party that I have spent the last 20 years working for places support for a specific candidate above making sure we have a party in the future. President Trump received 60% of the vote in Park County in the last election, I received 65%. The person I refuse to support is running for County Commissioner. He has been characterized in public by a former employee and Republican as a misogynistic narcissist who is repeatedly dishonest in his dealing with other people. While he was assessor our county attorney used to joke that the only thing more rare than a Sasquatch sighting in Fairplay was a Dave Wissel sighting at work in his office.

As County Commissioner looking out for the good of Park County must come first. I feel that the Republican Party has lost sight of just what it is we should be doing. We need people to respect us based on the quality of candidate, not just party loyalty.

It was just a little over a year ago that a small group of people that are now asking for my resignation were advertising that our RNC Committee man was working to help them recall two Republican Commissioners. The effort was a total failure. Ron Hanks is asking Republicans to vote Libertarian, and President Trump has asked people to vote for the Democrat over our Republican Senate candidate. Our party is becoming more fractured, and kicking out those who have worked to keep it together over the last 20 years does not bode well for our future.

Richard Elsner

The bigger picture

As was reported in a Sept. 9 front page story in The Flume entitled “Philosophical differences plague GOP,” the Republican Party in Park County has recently been hampered by an ideological split between traditional, more moderate conservatives, and those who align themselves farther to the right.

The District 3 commissioners race, it could be argued, represents ground zero in that ongoing, inter-party struggle. Meanwhile, Elsner’s support of Girodo and subsequent resignation as Treasurer of the Colorado Republican Party seems to embody the philosophical rift those sectors of the local GOP have been engaged in since the 2020 presidential elections.

Numerous Park County Republicans have overtly expressed support for Girodo in the weeks leading up to the Nov. 6 elections, while the more conservative members of the party in Park County, many of whom describe themselves as constitutionalists, seem to favor Wissel.

The argument from Elsner and other noteworthy Republican leaders and office-holders is that the hotly-contested commissioners’ race demands that they break ranks with the Republican Party in this instance for the sake of the county.

Those arguments have met with fierce criticism and accusations that Republicans supporting Girodo are traitors to the party, and that they are RINOs (Republicans in name only).

Wissel enters fresh off a victory over outgoing District 3 Commissioner, Ray Douglas, by a 133-vote margin in the Republican Primary.

Interestingly, it appears that Nov. 8 results will hinge largely on the preferences of registered Park County Republicans who opted for Douglas during the primaries on June 28.