

Missoulian

Hamilton man pleads guilty to intimidating library employee

By SEPP JANNOTTA Ravalli Republic | Posted: Friday, October 15, 2010 8:45 pm

HAMILTON - Michael Spreadbury, the former Hamilton mayoral candidate, pleaded guilty Friday to one count of felony intimidation stemming from charges linked to his harassment last November of a Bitterroot Public Library employee.

According to a plea agreement entered in the Missoula courtroom of District Court Judge Douglas G. Harkin, Spreadbury was handed a deferred sentence of one year, during which he must refrain from contact "by any means, including through a third party" with Nansu Roddy, a public services librarian in Hamilton.

The agreement requires the "removal of any images of, photos of, or content referring to Nansu Roddy from any website controlled by or contributed to by the defendant."

Spreadbury has a pair of websites he has regularly used to rail against Roddy, myriad government officials and the Ravalli Republic, all of whom he claims have been persecuting him and violating his constitutional rights.

Provided he obeys the agreement's provisions, the deal allows Spreadbury to avoid jail time or punitive fines. A conviction on felony intimidation would have carried the possibility of 10 years behind bars and a fine of up to \$50,000.

Spreadbury was originally charged with misdemeanor trespassing in June 2009, for returning to the library after he had been barred from using the facility after a dispute in which he insisted the library keep as reference material letters he'd written accusing Ravalli County officials of corruption.

With his unsuccessful mayoral bid in its final days, Spreadbury approached Roddy in a parking lot and told her she had better make the trespassing charge go away. That exchange, during which Roddy felt threatened, she later testified, prompted the felony intimidation charge.

Friday's guilty plea follows the dismissal of Spreadbury's lawsuit against Roddy in civil court. He had been seeking \$535,000 from Roddy for emotional distress caused by what he claimed was her giving "false information" to a police officer and judge during a protection hearing.

Spreadbury filed the suit last April with two others seeking total judgments of \$1.2 million against Roddy, Hamilton City Attorney Ken Bell, Ravalli County Attorney George Corn and Deputy County Attorney Angela Wetzsteon.

Larson dismissed the other two lawsuits last month.

Under the agreement reached Friday, Spreadbury will be on probation with the Montana Department of Corrections, requiring the usual check-ins, loss of privacy and restrictions on his movements.

He will also be forbidden from owning or possessing firearms of any kind.

A former employee of the Federal Emergency Management Agency - Spreadbury claims he still maintains a federal security clearance - the Hamilton resident "must seek and maintain employment or a program approved by" probation officers.

During Friday's hearing, Harkin added a timeline requiring Spreadbury's websites - BitterrootRising.com and MichaelSpreadbury.com - be clear of material pertaining to Roddy by Nov. 20.

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