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Mayoral candidate charged with trespass

by JOHN CRAMER - Ravalli Republic | Posted: Thursday, September 10, 2009 12:00 am

Hamilton mayoral candidate Michael Spreadbury pleaded not guilty Wednesday in Hamilton City Court to criminally trespassing at the Bitterroot Public Library.

Spreadbury was issued a summons for the misdemeanor offense on Aug. 20 when he entered and remained unlawfully at the library, where his privileges have been revoked, according to a complaint filed by City Attorney Ken Bell.

Spreadbury faces a maximum penalty of a \$500 fine, six months in jail and \$92 in court fees and surcharges.

City Court Judge Michael Reardon set an omnibus hearing for Nov. 2 - a day before Election Day - and released Spreadbury on recognizance.

Spreadbury, who requested a public defender, can't leave Ravalli County without the court's permission.

The judge also warned him not to enter the library's property, where he was banned in June after insisting he be allowed to put on reserve a copy of a letter accusing local public officials of routinely denying justice to citizens.

Spreadbury, 38, characterizes himself as a public watchdog and champion of free speech and civil rights who is dedicated to exposing a vast criminal conspiracy in the Bitterroot Valley.

According to public records, police have responded 13 times since April 2008 to complaints about Spreadbury's behavior at the library, the county administration building, the county clerk of court's office, the Ravalli Republic, the Hamilton school district, Marcus Daly Memorial Hospital, KMSO 102.5 Mountain FM and the county fairgrounds.

All of the complaints allege that he acted inappropriately. He has only been charged in connection with the library incident.

According to records, complaints by the library, county, newspaper and fair were related to Spreadbury's political issues. Complaints from the hospital and school concerned his former employment at those places. The complaint from the radio station concerned his allegation that its broadcasts interfere with his television reception.

The latest complaint to police occurred Friday night at the fairgrounds.

Deborah Rogala, the fair manager, said Spreadbury was holding a political placard and distributing "Michael Spreadbury for Mayor" pencils near the rodeo entrance, which violated fair rules requiring vendors to stay in their booths.

She said Spreadbury became belligerent and argumentative when she explained the rules and asked him repeatedly to return to his booth.

He initially refused, but then said, "You people scare me, I'm leaving," and he ran off, Rogala said.

Spreadbury accuses government, law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, the newspaper, the library, businesses, elected officials and others of incompetence, corruption, defamation, racketeering and other misconduct in a conspiracy controlled by County Attorney George Corn that reaches from the Bitterroot Valley and Helena to Washington, D.C.

Spreadbury's concerns apparently started in October 2006 when he was cited for allegedly assaulting a neighbor who had a burn pile on or near their adjoining property line.

According to court records, a jury convicted Spreadbury of misdemeanor assault in August 2007 and he was sentenced to six months in jail with five months suspended and \$514 in court costs and fees, but a judge threw out the conviction in January 2008 after ruling he had not received a timely trial.

Since then, Spreadbury has maintained he was "falsely" arrested, prosecuted and convicted and he has voiced his complaints about "the system" at public meetings, on his Web site and in other venues.

In February, the county commission sent Spreadbury a letter warning him to stop harassing county employees and acting disruptively.

The letter went out after county employees said he stood outside the county administration building, put a paper bag over his head with the eyes cut out, held an American flag upside down - which is a sign of distress - and took photographs of himself.

Spreadbury apparently was protesting the clerk and recorder's handling of his failed recall petitions against local and state officials.

In July, the Ravalli Republic sent Spreadbury a letter prohibiting him from coming onto its premises because of his behavior.

Spreadbury, who has threatened to file lawsuits against the city, county and newspaper, denies acting inappropriately in all the times that police have responded to complaints about his behavior.

Spreadbury is seeking to unseat incumbent Mayor Jerry Steele in the Nov. 3 election. His mayoral campaign slogan is "Spread The Word."

According to his Web site, Spreadbury is a geologist, consultant and teacher and a former U.S. Department of Homeland Security officer.

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Reporter John Cramer can be reached at 363-3300 or jcramer@ravallirepublic.com.

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**WILL MOSS - Ravalli Republic**

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Posted in News on *Thursday, September 10, 2009 12:00 am* Updated: 2:28 pm.

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