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Former candidate charged with intimidation

by PERRY BACKUS - Ravalli Republic | Posted: Wednesday, November 11, 2009 12:00 am

Former Hamilton mayoral candidate Michael Spreadbury is facing a felony intimidation charge for allegedly threatening a Hamilton librarian on Nov. 4.

Spreadbury appeared before Ravalli County Justice Robin Clute Tuesday afternoon.

According to an affidavit filed in the case, Spreadbury allegedly threatened Nansu Roddy as she left the Bitterroot Public Library midday on Nov. 4 in an adjoining parking lot.

It wasn't the first time that Spreadbury had a run in with library staff members.

Spreadbury was charged with misdemeanor criminal trespass at the library in August after being banned from the premises because he insisted he be allowed to place a letter accusing local public officials of violating citizens' rights on the library's reserve shelf.

Spreadbury pleaded not guilty in that case. A trial has been set for January.

The affidavit said Spreadbury spotted Roddy in the parking lot and pulled into an empty parking space that she was about to walk through. He opened his truck door and told the woman: "You need to do something about what is happening to me."

Roddy replied that she couldn't do anything, nor was she in a position to help him.

As the conversation continued, the woman told police that Spreadbury became more agitated and his voice changed when he said: "You need to go to Ken Bell and tell him to close this case."

Bell is the Hamilton city prosecutor.

The affidavit said Spreadbury continued to restate his demand that Roddy do something and raised his fist and pumped it into the air as he talked.

The woman told Hamilton police officers later that she felt threatened by Spreadbury's behavior and felt she needed to distance herself from him.

Roddy ran to her car as Spreadbury departed the scene in his truck.

The interaction was witnessed by Gavin Ricklefs from his office across the street. While he couldn't hear what was being said, Ricklefs said Spreadbury was "agitated and confrontational" and saw Spreadbury raise and pump his hand in the air at the woman.

Ricklefs told officers Roddy appeared frightened as she moved toward another parked vehicle. He was concerned enough about her safety that he was preparing to go to the scene when the confrontation ended, the affidavit said.

Spreadbury has a history of confrontation with a number of different people.

The Ravalli County Commission wrote Spreadbury a letter in February asking him to stop his harassment of county employees.

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, which Spreadbury denies.

Spreadbury will next appear in Ravalli County District Court on the felony charge.

Joel Thompson of the Cascade County attorney's office has been appointed as a special deputy county attorney in the case.

Thompson said Tuesday his appointment was a result of conflicts between Spreadbury and the Ravalli County attorney's office and Montana Attorney General's Office.

"Normally when there's a conflict, the case goes to the attorney general's office," Thompson said. "It's pretty unusual for there to be two levels of conflict of interest."

Thompson said he didn't know the particulars in the case.

Clute set Spreadbury's bail at \$10,000. She also ordered him to stay at least 600 feet away from the librarian's residence or the Hamilton Public Library.

If Spreadbury violates the conditions, Clute said he would be arrested and his bond would be set no less than \$50,000.

Spreadbury was defeated by incumbent Hamilton Mayor Jerry Steele by a vote of 756 to 205 in last week's election.

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Editor Perry Backus can be reached at 363-3300 or editor@ravallirepublic.com.