

Transcription Excerpts:
Rate Councilman Bruce Champeaux: How does he represent Sultan citizens?
(Revised June 21, 2007)

EXCERPT: June 11, 2007 Council Meeting (Rev. 6/21/07):

[G.R.I.T. note: This paragraph, and the associated footnote, was added on 6/21/07.] Uh, Mr. Good, thank you for your comment. I appreciate it. Uh...Gerry Gibson, where do I start? *[clears throat]* Your misre—representation of numbers and...the way things really are, goes back here a couple of town meetings ago when you fired at the Middle School to say that they (sic) city council – the city has spent \$3.2 million or so on consultant studies *[sounds like, "freeways"]*, money we could have spent on the police force. You knew better than that. But 99% of the people that were in there – don't come to meetings – they don't know better than that. So you got your message across loud and clear. You know that's not the case. Those three-point-two million dollars couldn't be spent anywhere but on where they'd been spent. They couldn't have been spent on more police officers. But you threw it out there anyway.¹ *[Footnote #1 below includes Mr. Gibson's comments, as well as a "wave-away" explanation by Mayor Tolson that those millions of dollars are "pass-through" fees. If both Mr. Champeaux and Mayor Tolson believe this is the truth, then that explains, at least in part, why the City is in such dire financial straits.]*

Now tonight you come in and say we're throwing this money away on this project for a railroad crossing that's so dangerous. We had a \$20,000 grant, yes. We had \$18,000 from a local person *[i.e., Ramirez]* who's going to develop that piece of pro---who—who was gonna develop that cross*[ing]*, I believe did not have to help make improvements in that, but was gonna pitch in to make that crossing become a reality. **You and your group spearheaded to not let this development go through²** so now there is no crossing. **So as far as I'm concerned, you need only look in the mirror as to why there's no crossing there.** Thank you. That's all I have tonight.

EXCERPT FROM MAY 24, 2007 COUNCIL MEETING (During the closing councilmember comments):

Um...listening to the – and following the constituents of four of five members, or eight or ten or twelve people who have been, um...vehement—vehement—vehemently against this *[i.e., the Sheriff's contract issue]*, I don't necessarily think it represents the majority or the issue that started probably with 4 or 5 or half a dozen or 10 or 20 or 30 people who come in and holler all the time about *[unintelligible]* issue. We have a job to do, and we need to get past that, and we need to finish the job. I...I'm a bit surprised that those people are not still here, when all of a sudden it seems we're finally close to making a—the—the decision. They were so...interested in it going to a public vote, and then have completely

[sounds like he says, "choosed"] away from that. I found that rather interesting. That's all I have.

EXCERPTS FROM MARCH 22, 2007 COUNCIL MEETING:

Re "deconstructing" of the March 15, 2007 Town Hall Meeting, attended by Chief Walser, a majority of the Sultan Police Officers, and approx. 150 citizens:

I think -- I was, after attending the last meeting, fortunate enough to have missed the two prior, *[unintelligible]* my son's basketball game, um... I think these town meetings generally...*[are]* extremely a big gripe session. You have black and you have white. And the others know that no matter what information you give the people, they don't come any closer together. They're still here, and they're still here *[hand movement: right and left hands separated, with a large air space in between]*. And from my -- what I—*[from what I see of that meeting, hopefully, you know, it--I would give it more [sounds like, "chances"], but I don't want it to just be a total – a gripe session. The best thing [i.e., event] in town that night was to be at the middle school. And there were people that were rude, were inconsiderate, and...[trails off his thought]. Personally I know that I didn't need to be there, and, you know, sit through that, and I just [unintelligible] didn't want to [unintelligible]. And it's not that you all needed [unintelligible], it's just that people will, they followed up and they....* **Hey, look, all the people that were there a week ago -- and we had maybe a handful of people that were there -- are with us tonight. How much do they really want to be involved? They're not back a week later. The people that want to be involved are here now, and, and were here tonight.** They just came because they knew the fireworks may fly and they want to be part of it. Black and White, no grey. And we had to sit here, right in the middle of the grey, and not see black and white. I... I don't know.

Champeaux's vote to "stop the council clock [past its 10:00 mandatory stop time]" so they can finish their council meeting:

Tolson: We do need a motion to suspend time. Time stands still.

Blair: So moved.

Tolson: Second?

Slawson: Second.

Tolson: All in favor, please say Aye. Opposed?

Champeaux: I'm going to abstain.

Tolson: Why?

Champeaux: Because I'd rather be at home.

Tolson: Okay. All right."

During 3/22/07 Councilmember Closing Comments:

Bruce Champeaux: You know...*[pause]* we as councilmen have to take the high road. We can get the road well used *[or, "we use"]* for people...and if – why if why I stay and watch a basketball game spoke volumes to you, I'm glad that it did. But when you – until you're up there getting the abuse – and it wasn't, it wasn't that bad. It wasn't that bad. *[unintelligible]* work. But it's just that, "Here we go again," you know? And it—but until you're there catching it knowing that...you know, it kind of related back to being – it used to be the forums for people who were campaigning to run for office. You had to, you know, go to these forums and speak with the interviewer, and people would come and you'd hope you'll gain a voter group, the people that come—that came to these meetings, or came to these forums, they were voting for this guy or this guy. No matter what you say, they weren't changing one vote. No matter what was coming out of this thing, you—you're not changing people. The people that come there already know which way they're going to vote. And that they have—that they're not only have to know that this is what's happening, but they're for the people that start at times (to) get abusive, and you have to sit there and take it. Yeah, it—it's tough at times to be able to sit there and put up with that. It really does (sic). You know...honestly, most people think politicians are crooks anyway. So that's just the way it is. *[smattering of laughter]*. And you know what? A lot of people think that all the cops do is sit down for a doughnut, so they have to eat doughnuts all day. And that's not fair. It's not – you know? People's perceptions. I'm not picking on you, Fred. I'm not picking on you.

Throughout 2006, continuing in 2007, Mr. Champeaux has been casting "Smart Aleck"-type votes, making a mockery of serious issues and the voting process. His actions make it clear he is failing represent the citizens of Sultan. Even worse, it shows that he has lost his desire to do so. (This is a disappointment. There was a time in the not-too-distant past when Mr. Champeaux appeared to do his homework and seemed dedicated to representing *all* of the people of Sultan rather than a select few.)

More unforgivable than Mr. Champeaux's Bad Boy behavior, however, is the mayor's and fellow councilmembers' encouragement by finding humor in his unprofessional conduct.

Examples of such votes are: "Because I want to be consistent" and "might as well be consistent" (i.e., with the same votes he cast several years ago even though the topic/issue had substantially changed, as well as its effects on the City's finance and security), and "Just because," and "Just because I feel like it."

¹ *[This footnote was added on 6/21/07]* **In response to Mr. Champeaux's disparagement of Mr. Gibson's comments during the March 15, 2007 Town Meeting (re SPD issues) at the Sultan Middle School, here is the Straight Stuff:**

(Link to audio: http://www.ittakesgrit.org/AUDIO-MP3/Town-Mtg-SPD-070315_O_Pub-Cmt_Gerry-Gibson_BT-response.mp3)

Gerry Gibson's 3/15/07 comments: "Two minutes [is] too short a time to address issues. Stated losing 70% of one's staff (i.e., police officers) will definitely affect quality of service. Re budget problems, people

don't trust the city and the issue should be decided by a vote of the people. Complains the city spent \$3.3 million in consultant services which would have paid for plenty of police.

Tolson's response/explanation for Gibson's statement re \$3.3 million for consultant services:

"Those are - consultants are pass-through dollars. The developer comes in, he needs to have something done, such as a review or uh, a[n] ecology, uh, uh - a-a checklist done, and things like that, those will be brought to them. The issue such as we have for consultants for our sewer lines and our water lines, those are paid for [and] commonly referred to as an "enterprise fund." The water line pays for the water issues, the sewer line pays for the sewer issues. We have a lot of those, yes we do. So does every city."

[G.R.I.T.'s note of comment on both Gibson's and Tolson's statements which was published on our audio page for that 3/15/07 town meeting: *First, Mr. Gibson was talking about \$3.3 million in consultant fees for planning, advisory and certain legal services and counsel, **not** developer "pass-through" fees for one-time charges of water and sewer new hook-up/connections or park and traffic impact fees which the developer always adds to the price of the new home he/she builds which are passed onto the homeowner. Moreover, the city fails to adequately charge developers back for a myriad of standard developer fees contained on its published Fee Schedule, so Tolson's statement is disingenuous, to say the least. A recent example of a fee on which developers receive a "Get out of jail free card" is the recent \$1,500 fee (plus "direct costs" such as the city's legal fees and other incurred expenses) for a Hearing Examiner (John Galt) appeal by a developer whenever the H.E. denies a developer's plat application. Last year Galt recommended denial of approximately six plats, all of which were non-compliant due to incompetence and a sloppy planning process by the city which could easily have been avoided. Thus, at a very minimum, \$9,000 could have been collected. Not a lot of money, true, but certainly enough to pay for the \$9,000 the City spent to hire a lobbyist to schmooze the legislature for "free" water quality money to pay for improvements to its wastewater treatment plant so more developers can build more houses for more people who will be protected by less police.]*

|| Please take note of Mr. Champeaux's actions: He is blaming citizens for participating in the public development process, while absolving the city's planning official (Rick Cisar) of major errors in judgment and failure to follow Sultan's PUD code. The difficulties in attempting to pass the Ramirez development plat application (and several others), through the hearing examiner process has been entirely the fault of the City and has cost everyone involved, including developers, a good deal of time and expense. (To add salt to this wound, the PUD subdivision code was brought to Sultan by Mr. Cisar because he was familiar with it and used it for development plats at his previous employer, the City of Mt. Vernon, over the objections of Sultan citizens.)