Fort White Fires Interim Clerk Glenn Hunter, Rehires former Asst. Clerk Amid Charter, Policy, and Agenda Clashes

During a tumultuous two-hour meeting, a new majority on the Fort White Town Council voted 4–1 to fire Interim Town Clerk Glenn Hunter after four months, immediately rehiring an unqualified former clerk amid clashes over municipal governance, contract law, and the Town Charter.

Led by Mayor George Jacob Thomas — absent from most meetings over the past eight months — and backed by newly inducted councilmen Dennis Rivera (Columbia County's Public Information Officer) and Alex Veiga, the majority moved aggressively to overhaul town hall. Mayor Thomas accused Hunter of ignoring emails, failing to send business tax receipts, and mishandling late wastewater contractor payments, allegedly costing millions in state grants.

Hunter refuted the allegations, noting he inherited months of unpaid bills while Thomas delayed signing bank access paperwork for weeks. Despite this, Hunter and the town engineer persuaded state officials to cover 55,000 dollars in interest penalties and salvaged six million dollars for the wastewater project. Hunter also accused Thomas of previously pressuring him to unethically inflate former clerk Kelly McPherson's pay. Only veteran Councilman Bill Koon voted against firing Hunter.

The council then unanimously rehired McPherson as interim clerk, overriding objections from Koon and Vice Mayor Monica Merricks that she lacked the charter-mandated four years of experience and had no established hours or pay — which Rivera suggested keeping out of the public forum. A bid to fire temporary Assistant Clerk Christy Thompson shifted to advertising her position instead. Next, Thomas tried to immediately drop IT vendor CompuTrend, run by Thompson's husband, Charlie, citing marriage optics and a brief corporate registration lapse. After Charlie Thompson defended his contract and town attorneys warned that retroactive corporate reinstatement made termination a lawsuit liability, the motion failed 3–2, with Rivera joining Koon and Merricks.

Finally, the article details Thomas's improper agenda changes: striking a residency challenge against Veiga, cutting the mandatory Clerk's Report, and adding nine late items by misapplying a "citizen" exception to himself in violation of town policy and the 2023 Charter, while legal counsel stayed silent. Departing graciously, Hunter urged ethical governance, warning that state officials are closely watching Fort White's 50 million dollars in water and sewer assets.

"I can tell you from the law office's perspective, Mr. Hunter has taken a situation that was in a free fall essentially and gotten it to a level place, and all I can tell you is what I see as your attorney, and he's responsive to us when we ask for something, when we ask for records, when we ask for ordinances or information. We were not getting that [before]... What I'm saying is that Mr. Hunter got us to a situation where we could operate as a city and effectively do so."

— Town Attorney Scott Walker

Delivered immediately before the vote, Walker's candid assessment directly refutes the mayor's rationale, encapsulating the article's core conflict between political maneuvering and administrative competence.