

Dozens rally to show support for Orjiako, Clark County staff

Former commissioner Ed Barnes criticizes Madore's behavior



By **Katie Gillespie** (</author/katiegillespie>), Columbian County Government Reporter

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As the Clark County council waged its weekly battle to get through a regular hearing, community leaders and county officials gathered in the courtyard of the Public Service Center in a show of support for county staff



Local labor leader Ed Barnes, who briefly served as a Democratic Clark County commissioner in 2014, hosted a rally Tuesday to show solidarity with county staff members who have been the target of recent allegations by Republican Councilor David Madore. About 30 people gathered in the courtyard during the county's lunch hour, chatting and praising county staff for their work.

Madore recently leveled allegations that Planning Director Oliver Orjiako and Deputy Prosecutors Chris Horne and Christine Cook lied about the impact of Alternative 4, Madore's controversial zoning component of the Clark County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update. He also has accused Acting County Manager Mark McCauley on several occasions of insubordination.

Barnes, a frequent critic of the county council, said Madore's treatment of county staff is "the worst I've ever seen."

"People need a change here to start working together," Barnes said. "It's either his way or the highway."

Madore, who announced at the Clark County Republican Convention that he would run this year for reelection, did not return a request for comment Tuesday afternoon.

State Rep. Jim Moeller, D-Vancouver, spoke briefly to the crowd and told The Columbian that he attended "to support the employees of Clark County."

"They are the best," he said.

Orjiako, surrounded by co-workers and community members who swung by to visit, said he was surprised by the turnout. Orjiako recently filed a whistleblower and harassment complaint accusing Madore of violating the Growth Management Act with his work on the county's 20-year growth plan, and accused Madore of racially motivated harassment.

Orjiako noted, however, that the rally was "not just for me."

"It's for the entire county employees," he said.

Surplus overturned

On the sixth floor, meanwhile, the Clark County council grappled for some time with whether to continue working to sell 20 acres of property just east of Paradise Point State Park.

In the end, the council voted 3-2 to reverse last year's decision to surplus that property, which was bought in 1996 using Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program and Conservation Futures funding

The sale has been largely unpopular, with local conservation groups criticizing the decision to surplus the land. The property was originally purchased as part of a 243-acre acquisition of land along the East Fork of the Lewis River. The long-term plan, which has not come to fruition, was to develop a network of trails and recreation areas.

The conversation became yet another example of the increasing tensions between Madore and McCauley, with Madore accusing the county manager of orchestrating decisions behind closed doors. Madore read an email from Environmental Services Director Don Benton, in which Benton claims to have been approached by McCauley to prepare a staff report to reverse the sale of the property.

"He said that the majority of the BOCC (county council) had made a decision not to sell the property and wanted the process stopped," Benton said in the email, which Madore later shared on his Facebook page.

McCauley, who missed Tuesday's meeting for a training seminar, denied that he'd said a decision was made. The council briefly discussed the sale at last week's board time meeting when McCauley told the council that the Public Works Department planned to apply for a grant through the Recreation and Conservation Office.

Working to surplus land purchased with Conservation Futures money might hurt the county's chances at receiving that grant, McCauley told the council last week.

"The five-member board needed to be brought up to speed on the process so they could reform the process or stop it," he said. "The grant (application) accelerated the process."

Public meetings experts say McCauley may have violated the Open Public Meetings Act earlier this year when he decided in March not to send a public meeting notice to The Reflector, the county's paper of record at the time, announcing a public hearing on March 22 that was scheduled by resolution in September. McCauley explained that three of the five councilors were uninterested in the topic of that meeting—a charter amendment proposed by Madore.

McCauley, however, said "no decision had been made" on the surplus of the 20 acres.

"Decisions get made in public meetings," he said.

Republican Councilor Julie Olson, who voted to reverse the sale, called Madore's continued accusations against McCauley "frankly tiresome."



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**Minh Quân** · Chu van An Saigon VietNam

Best wishes to the county employees!

Reply 1 13 hrs

**Loren Lee**

"Madore read an email from Environmental Services Director Don Benton, in which Benton claims to have been approached by McCauley to prepare a staff report to reverse the sale of the property He said that the majority of the BOCC (county council) had made a decision not to sell the property and wanted the process stopped," Benton said in the email, which Madore later shared on his Facebook page "

Hmmm Benton strikes me as taunting MaCauley to fire him so he can collect a big pay day or jackpot settlement His status is more than a little tenuous once Madore and Mielke are gone and he knows it Smart Benton is not.

Reply 2 21 hrs

**Mike Yancey** · Clark College -- Vancouver, Washington

We have our own Donald chump twin as a king here? We need to dethrone him next election thanks.

Reply 1 22 hrs

**Betty Sue Morris** · Vancouver, Washington

I had hoped to stop by but wasn't able to. Oliver and all the staff have my full support!

Reply 3 Apr 27, 2016 7 20am

**Stuart L. Riley** · Vancouver, Washington

With each passing day, it's becoming more clear that Madore, and his pal, Benton want this county run by ALEC Neither really give a damn about the county They're just using, no, abusing it for their own benefit

Reply 7 Apr 26, 2016 8 54pm

**Fran Hammond** · Vancouver, Washington

I am so sorry that I could not attend and thank all that did go to support Oliver and other county employees!

Reply 11 Apr 26 2016 8 20pm



Betty Althaus Montgomery Portland State University

Me, too! Wish I had known about it!

Reply 1 Apr 27, 2016 6:51am

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