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## NEWS

# Ohio auditors say Hudson city email shouldn't be used to discuss political campaigns

*Next audit of Hudson finances will review email use.*

**Phil Keren** Kent Weeklies

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HUDSON — The Auditor of State's Office told the Hudson city council president that if he is using his council email account to promote political campaigns, he should "cease and desist" from those activities "immediately."

Auditor of State Keith Faber and Chief Deputy Auditor Robert R. Hinkle issued that directive to City Council President Bill Wooldredge (at large) in an Aug. 28 letter.

"All information relative to this matter is being forwarded to [the auditor of state's] regional staff for review in the next regular [financial] audit of the [city]," wrote auditor of state officials. "This letter will also be forwarded to the Summit County prosecuting attorney for her awareness and consideration."

Wooldredge told the *Hub-Times*, "I've been advised by legal counsel not to say anything."

The letter was issued after Hudson Mayor Craig Shubert in July asked the auditor to investigate whether Wooldredge violated state law when using his council email account.

While noting they had not confirmed whether the allegations against Wooldredge were accurate, auditor of state officials told him that if the claims are true, he must stop the practices "immediately."

The auditor of state representatives wrote they were notified Wooldredge "may have inappropriately engaged in activities potentially in violation of Ohio law as well as city of Hudson policies in support of a political campaign."

"Information we have been provided suggests that that you are utilizing your city of Hudson email address and services to promote one or more campaigns for Hudson City Council," wrote auditor of state officials.

They noted state law prohibits individuals from using public money to benefit a candidate.

The complaint that Shubert sent to the auditor in July included 10 exhibits he collected from The Hudson Files website, which is publicizing emails sent by council members and other city officials.

Exhibits Shubert sent to the auditor included an email from Wooldredge to council candidate Nicole Kowalski telling her he would sign her nomination petition and donate to her campaign, an email string among Wooldredge, Kowalski and Nicole Davis where they set up a meeting to discuss Davis' plan to run for council, and an email string between Wooldredge and Davis where Wooldredge said he would help Davis with her campaign.

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