

Dear Mayor Cookendorfer,

This letter is to address the conduct of Chief Culp in his interactions with me. Throughout my time as Municipal Judge for Ridgeway, Chief Culp has shown a lack of manners, professionalism, and respect for the Court. He has consistently attempted to speak over and interrupt myself and others within the courtroom. Furthermore, he has repeatedly continued to argue after rulings were made, questioned rulings and decisions made by the Court, and challenged courtroom procedure.

During the Term of Court for the month of May, he openly attempted to tell me how I should sentence individuals and insinuated that previous judges had been relieved of their duties for not issuing sentences the way he thought they ought to be issued. When I called him down for that, he backstepped, told me that he was not trying to tell me how to run the Court, said that he was just telling me what "they" (whoever that may be) want done, and then continued to tell me how he thought I ought to do my job until I finally cut him off by calling the next case.

Less than ten minutes before court was set to begin for the month of June, Chief Culp called me to inform me that he would not be attending court because he was not feeling well. I told him that would cause a major problem and asked him for a doctor's excuse. He got very defensive and rude with me. He told me that he would not be going to the doctor or providing any type of paperwork to explain his absence. Furthermore, he said that he did not even have to call me because he had already told his supervisor and that it wasn't his fault that his supervisor had not done his job of relaying the information to me. When I asked to whom he was referring, he said that it was Councilman Prioleau who should have told me that Chief Culp wouldn't be at court that day. Finally, he said "do what you have to do." At no point did he request a continuance for any of the cases that were on the docket. It is my belief that if a person is sick enough to miss court, he is sick enough to go to the doctor.

As a result of Chief Culp's failure to show up for court or request a continuance, coupled with his overall rude and contemptuous attitude towards the Court and me, each of the tickets on the docket received a "not guilty" verdict.

If there are any questions that you or any member of the Town Council should have for me, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Adrian E. Wilkes

Municipal Judge

Ridgeway, SC 29130