



THE OFFICE OF
THE CRIMINAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY
McLENNAN COUNTY, TEXAS

219 North 6th Street, Suite 200
Waco, Texas 76701
Phone - (254) 757-5084
Fax - (254) 757-5021

March 2, 2016

Abelino "Abel" Reyna
Criminal District Attorney

Major Chance Collins
Texas Rangers-Company F
Waco, Texas

via: hand delivery

Re: Will Jones-McLennan County Commissioner Precinct 3
Suzanne Nemmer-Admin Assist. Precinct 3

Dear Major Collins:

Enclosed you will find information that was anonymously mailed to my office regarding the above referenced individuals. I understand that you will deal with this information as the Rangers deem appropriate.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,


Abel Reyna
McLennan County Criminal District Attorney

Mr. Abel Reyna
McLennan County District Attorney
501 Washington Avenue
Waco, Texas 76701

Dear Mr. Reyna,

It has come to the attention of many in our community that misconduct has occurred regarding the upcoming election for Precinct 3 McLennan County Commissioner specifically the Republican primary.

The front page of our local newspaper, the *Waco Tribune Herald*, touted the headline:
Precinct 3 race features allegation of bribery.

The article states that incumbent Mr. Will Jones offered two separate times to “pay (his opponent) the price of filing fee to drop out of the race.” I am enclosing a copy of this article, assuming you have already read it, but as concrete evidence of this fact.

I am, as well, enclosing a copy of a Facebook post that Mr. Jones posted on January 8, 2016 which states:

“I offered to refund Benny’s filing fee because I thought it was the right thing to do...” amongst other political reasonings to the jist of the fact that he may have more experience. Mr. Jones was a finance major at Baylor prior to his work as a stockbroker and investor. He touts that helping with the explosion in West was his proudest accomplishment. I and many helped with that effort and our proud of the help we gave. Was it not his job to jump to a need such as this? Isn’t this decision as to takes this office up to the voters, not him, to decide?

Is it true that he, amongst other elected or appointed officials have to sign a statement upon entering office stating the following:

**STATEMENT OF ELECTED/APPOINTED OFFICER
(Pursuant to Tex. Const. art. XVI, ~ 1(b), amended 2001)**

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I have not directly or indirectly paid, offered, promised to pay, contributed, or promised to contribute any money or thing of value, or promised any public office or employment for the giving or withholding of a vote at the election at which I was elected or as a reward to secure my appointment or confirmation, whichever the case may be, so help me God.

If Mr. Will Jones did indeed sign this statement and, being that he is in his third year of his first four year term, many would assume that he has, he has formally sworn that he would not, indeed, offer money or anything of value to ensure his vote at the election. Is this not exactly what he is doing? By attempting to take out his opponent, he is basically buying his way in. Or, at least, this is very much the way most community members shall construe it.

I have contacted the Texas Ethics Commission and received counsel on this situation on what best to do. Contacting our County District Attorney was the advice I have received from them and others. Please see to it that justice is done in this matter.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I wish to remain anonymous on the grounds for fear of retribution on his or his family’s part.

Waco Tribune-Herald

Monday, Feb. 15, 2016 ■ \$1.00

In God we trust

Breezy ■ High: 74 ■ Low: 39

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Precinct 3 race features allegation of bribery

By **TOMMY WITHERSPOON**
twitherspoon@wacotrib.com

Ben Matus said he decided to run for Precinct 3 McLennan County commissioner to give Republican voters another choice besides incumbent Will Jones.

The Republican primary race has been relatively low-key except that Matus says Jones tried to take that choice away by twice offering to pay him the price of his filing fee to drop out of the race.

Early voting starts Tues-

day and runs through Feb. 26. Election Day is March 1.

Jones confirmed that he made the offers but said he

merely did so to help Matus if he decided to gracefully back out of the race.

"I did say that I would refund his money, and I told him that would be a good idea for him," Jones told the Tribune-Herald last month.



Jones



Matus

"There is no way it could be considered a bribe. There is nothing wrong about it. I don't think what I said

was a bribe. It was a simple business transaction. The guy obviously has nothing to run on, that's the thing," Jones said.

Matus, 63, considered

See **BRIBERY**, Page 7A

Precinct 1 candidates debate conservatism

By **CASSIE L. SMITH**
csmith@wacotrib.com

The two candidates for the McLennan County Precinct 1 commissioner race are both highlighting their conservatism heading into the start of early voting.

Incumbent Kelly Snell, 57, of Robinson, faces challenger Cory Priest, 49, of Lorena, in the March 1 primary election.

Early voting starts Tuesday and continues through Feb. 26 for the

precinct that includes parts of Waco, Beverly Hills, Robinson, Golinda,

Lorena, Bruceville-Eddy and Moody.

County commissioners receive a \$90,020 annual salary.

Snell, owner of Texas Electrical Energy Savers Inc., is seeking his third



Snell



Priest

term on the court, while Priest, owner of Priest Cattle Co., is vying for his first

chance to serve. Both candidates are running as Republicans.

Priest said while he is not privy to all the information because he is not

See **DEBATE**, Page 7A

BRIBERY

From Page 1A

filing a complaint with the Texas Ethics Commission or with the McLennan County District Attorney's Office.

He told a large crowd at the McLennan County Republican Women's Club last week that he was anxious to get an opinion back from the ethics commission on his complaint. But, two days later, after consulting with an attorney in San Antonio, Matus said he decided not to pursue any avenue of complaint against Jones.

"I am not a lawyer, and nobody would give me any opinion about it," Matus said. "I did fill out the paperwork with the Texas Ethics Commission, but I decided not to send it."

Jones said last week that his offer to reimburse Matus his \$1,250 filing fee if he decided to drop out of the race was based on Matus' response to his question about why Matus wanted to run against him, and what he wanted to accomplish.

Jones, 44, who is seeking his second four-year term, said Matus had no clear answer to his question.

Since that uptick in the race's public profile, the race has created few blips on the local political radar screen.

Jones, who has a finance degree from Baylor Uni-

Early voting information

Early voting times:

- 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday
- 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday
- 1 to 6 p.m. Sunday
- 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Feb. 22-26

Early voting locations:

- McLennan County Elections Administration Office in the Records Building, 214 N. Fourth St., Suite 300.
- Robinson Community Center, 106 W. Lyndale Drive, Robinson.
- Waco Multi-Purpose Community Center, 1020 Elm Ave., Waco.
- First Assembly of God Church, 6701 Bosque Blvd., Waco.
- Brazos Meadows Baptist Church, 625 S. Hewitt Drive, Hewitt.

versity and worked as a stockbroker before branching off into investments and real estate, said he is proud of the record he has built during the past three years in office.

Jones had been in office three months and 17 days when the West Fertilizer Co. plant exploded, destroying much of West, killing 15 people and injuring scores of others.

Jones worked with local, state and federal officials to bring the northern McLennan County town much-needed relief but also helped craft new legislation that expanded the definition of disaster to allow for the reappraisal of property damaged in any type of disaster declared by the governor.

"We lobbied very hard,"

Jones said. "We got on our soapbox from West from the very beginning. That is one thing I am most proud of. I would do it all over again. I was still getting used to the way county government worked, and my learning curve went through the roof."

Matus, who has been an auto repair instructor at Texas State Technical College for 29 years, is a native of West and a former West City Council member. He said he thinks he would complement the long line of Precinct 3 commissioners who traditionally have been from West.

"I wanted to give the people a choice," Jones said. "Now, they have that choice. My opponent wanted to deny the voters that right by paying me not to

run. He called it a mere business decision. He tried to get rid of the competition because no election means back to business as usual."

Matus said he wants to help curb what he considers excessive and unnecessary spending by the commissioners' court.

"Spending seems to overcome the income," Matus said. "They are spending and spending more. My opponent voted himself a raise back when he got into office, and he approved a \$7,000 taxpayer-funded person to run around in leotards at a sporting event to urge kids to get off the couch. Sounds like Michelle Obama."

Jones said he gets but one vote on the commissioners' court, and his salary was raised by the court.

"That decision was out of my hands," he said. "The Precinct 3 commissioner, for whatever reason, was paid less than all the other commissioners. I came in making less, and it was the will of the court, who felt like the Precinct 3 commissioner should make the same amount as all the rest."

County commissioners are paid \$90,020 a year.

The \$7,000 expenditure was part of an American Heart Association get-active campaign, and the county partnered with the city of Waco in an effort to promote a healthy, active lifestyle at an event at the

Precinct 3 candidates

Will Jones, incumbent

Age: 42

Hometown: Waco

Family: wife, Merryll; two sons, Grant and Reid

Occupation: County commissioner

Civic service: Member of Waco Rotary Club, West Kiwanis Club, Antioch Community Church, Metropolitan Planning Organization, Tax Increment Finance Board

Party: Republican

Website: Democracy.com/electwill

Ben Matus

Age: 63

Hometown: West

Family: wife, Sherry; four sons, Garratt, Brannon, Clint and Clay

Occupation: TSTC auto mechanics instructor
Civic service: Knights of Columbus, former West City Council member, former TSTC Faculty Senate member, former TSTC Alumni Association president

Party: Republican

Website: Bennymatus.com

Ferrell Center, Jones said.

Jones said when he took office, the county was on the verge of having a \$9 million budget deficit. He credits his hard work and that of his fellow commissioners, County Judge Scott Felton and Auditor Stan Chambers for righting the county's financial ship through measures such as refinancing the debt on the Jack Harwell Detention Center, which will save the county \$13 million during the next 20 years.

Precinct 3 includes part of northwest Waco, a portion of Woodway, West, Gholson, Ross, Tours, Le-

roy, Chalk Bluff, Elm Mott and parts of Lacy Lakeview and Bellmead.



Texas Lottery Results

SATURDAY'S LOTTO

Numbers: 8-25-26-32-37-51

Match 6: 0

Match 5: 12 (\$2,209)

Match 4: 646 (\$60)

Match 3: 14,433 (\$3)

Estimated next jackpot: \$6.5 million

\$6.5 million

SATURDAY'S CASH 5

Winning numbers: 1-7-18-25-36

Match 5: 0

Match 4: 52 (\$500)

Match 3: 1,793 (\$10)

Match 2: 18,543 (\$2)

For more results, see
www.texaslottery.org



Will Jones



January 8 · Waco, Waco · 

I offered to refund Benny's filing fee because I thought it was the right thing to do. His only platform was that the seat has always been from West. He chose not to accept and that's fine. I have no problem running for re-election on my record of providing essential services to our citizens, protecting taxpayers, and securing our safety and quality of life today and for future generations. That's what I promised I would do, and my record shows that I have followed through on those promises.

28 Likes

 Like  Comment  Share