

GRAND JURY SUMMONED TO INVESTIGATE OPEN MEETING ALLEGATIONS

*PATRICK HENRY ONCE SAID THAT LIBERTY IS NEVER SECURE AS LONG AS
GOVERNMENT DOES BUSINESS IN SECRET.*

The Liberty Sentinel, Dec. 21, 2007

(Chanute Tribune) A tribunal of Neosho County District Court Judges has found the grand jury petition filed in October by Citizens for a Cleaner Chanute to be in proper form. A pool of prospective grand jurors will be summoned to appear in district court at 9 a.m. Jan. 30, 2008.

In mid-October the Citizens for a Cleaner Chanute filed their second bid for a grand jury investigation into allegations of violations of the Kansas Open Meetings Act; tampering with public records for editing meeting minutes and broadcasts of City Commission meetings; a conflict of interest regarding Terri Orozco's position on the commission and her employment with the Chanute Housing Authority; promoting obscenity; official misconduct; intimidation of witnesses; and misuse of public funds.

Later in October County Clerk Randal Neely certified 340 of the petition's signatures were qualified electors of Neosho County. The trio of judges began their deliberations and recently returned their ruling.

According to the order summoning the grand jury, signed by Chief Judge Timothy E. Brazil, the number of qualified signatures contained on the petition exceeds the 215 required by Kansas law and the petition is found to be in proper form.

The judges' decision to allow a grand jury to be summoned does not in itself determine the defendants' guilt or innocence. The grand jury, once it is convened in late-January, will have to sift through evidence and determine if any criminal charges should be filed by the court. Kansas statute says the grand jury will not serve for more than three months from Jan. 30, 2008, unless it is extended by order of the district court.

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