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TOP STORY

Former Gordon mayor sentenced to 12 months in jail, approved for a \$5,000 appeal bond

Michele Forehand
Feb 20, 2019

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A former Gordon mayor will spend a year in jail followed by two years' probation for his conviction on two counts of voter fraud last month.

On Wednesday, Houston County Circuit Judge Kevin Moulton sentenced Elbert Melton to a three-year split-sentence.

State's attorney Mark Johnson recommended Melton receive a 10-year sentence per count to run consecutively, but to no avail. Johnson also opposed Melton's appeal bond. Moulton approved the appeal bond at \$5,000 for each count, said defense attorney Billy Joe Sheffield.

A Houston County jury found Melton guilty last month on two counts of voter fraud after a 45-minute deliberation.

Sheffield did not represent Melton during his trial. He was hired following Melton's jury trial to represent Melton during his sentencing and appeal.

“I have reviewed the case transcripts,” Sheffield said. “I have seen numerous errors throughout the case,” Sheffield said.

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Sheffield believes the errors in Milton’s case will benefit his client during the appeal process.

While on probation, Melton can’t participate in any capacity in any elections or campaigns.

Last September, a grand jury returned indictments against Melton on three charges of absentee ballot fraud and one charge of second-degree theft of property. One fraud count was dismissed because the victim passed away.

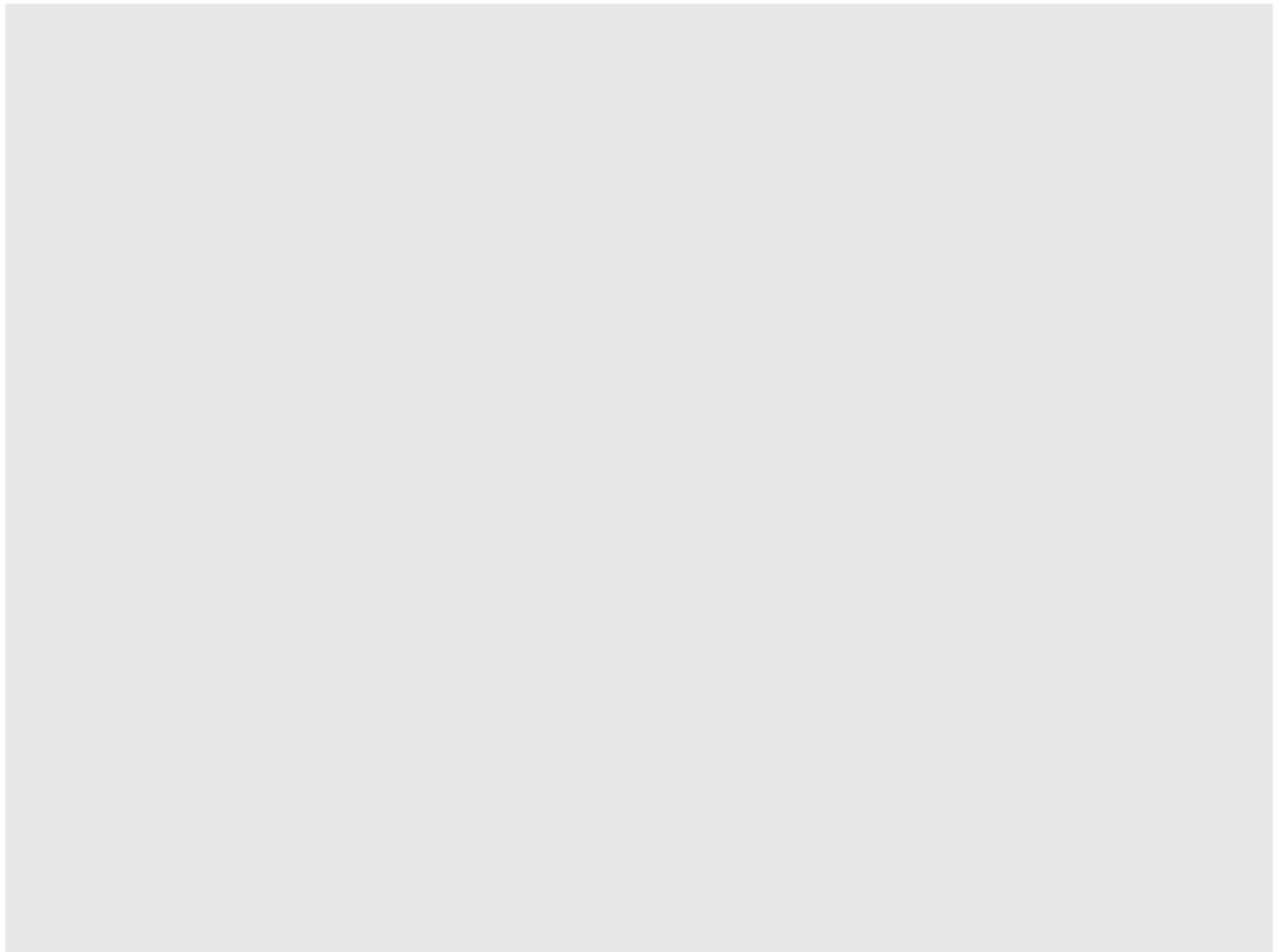
According to Melton’s arrest warrants, he is accused of willfully and unlawfully falsifying absentee ballots or verification documents. He is also charged with knowingly obtaining or exerting unauthorized control over \$1,700 belonging to the

Town of Gordon. He was elected mayor in August 2016, defeating Priscilla Wilson by a 16-vote margin, 99 to 83.

In 2003, Melton was convicted of theft of services and criminal tampering related to allegations he illegally hooked into the city water resources.

Voter fraud is a Class C felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

Melton faces an additional felony offense yet to be tried.



Elbert Melton

Houston County Sheriff's Department

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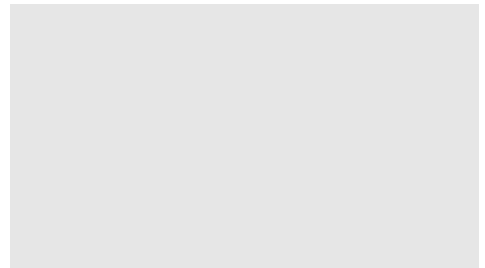
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Michele Forehand

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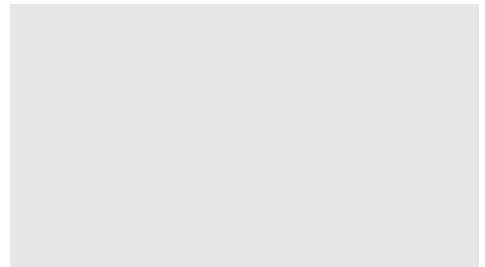
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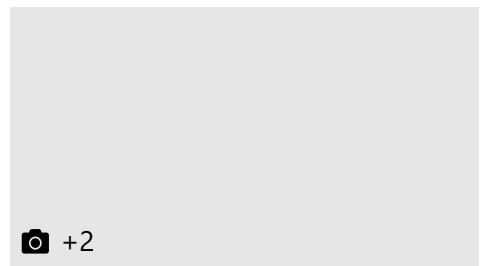
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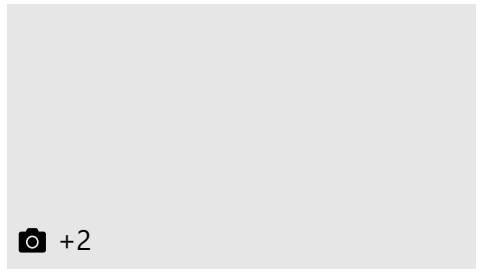
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