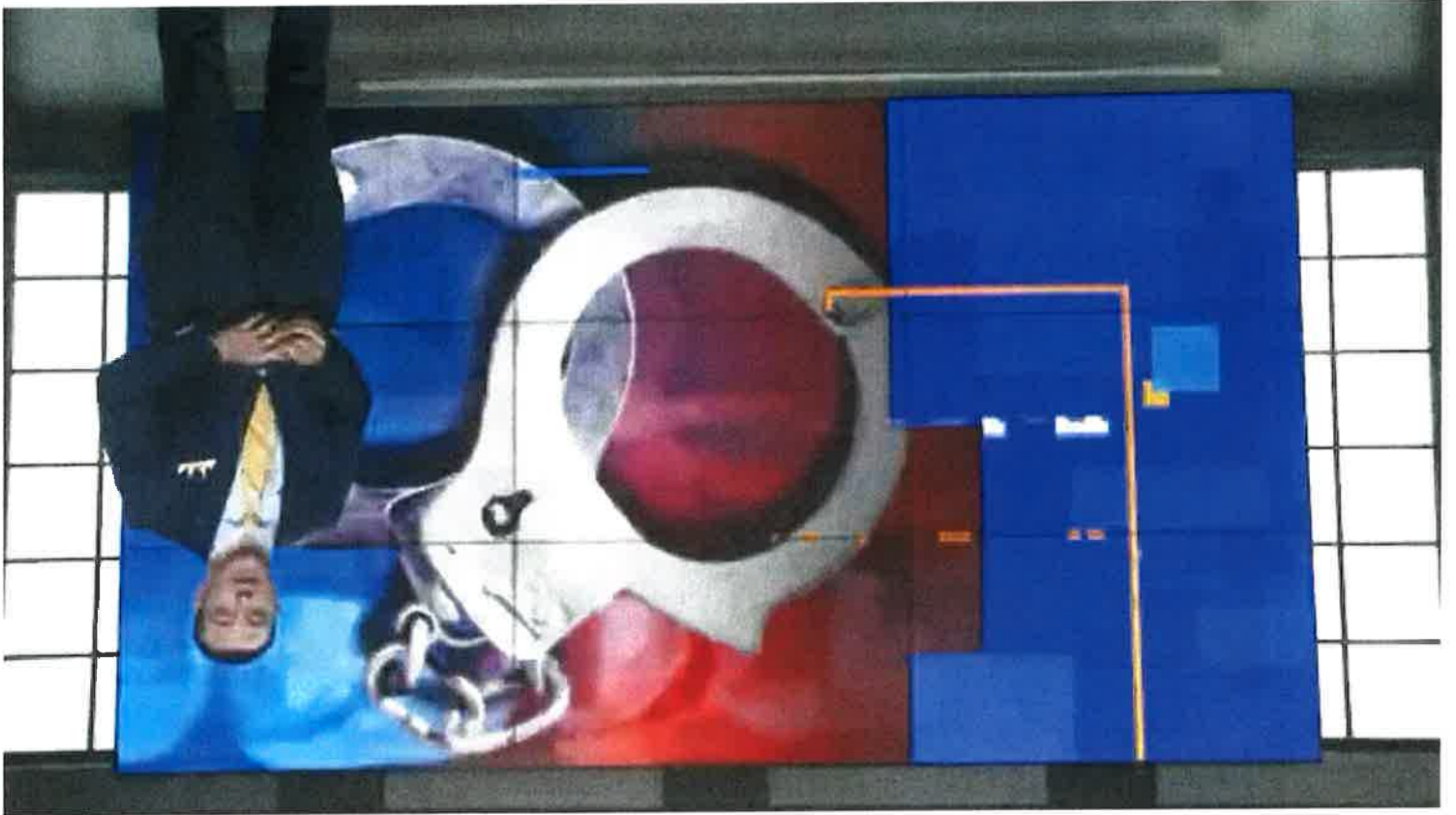




NEWS

Former River Bend trustee indicted in election where she tallied six votes

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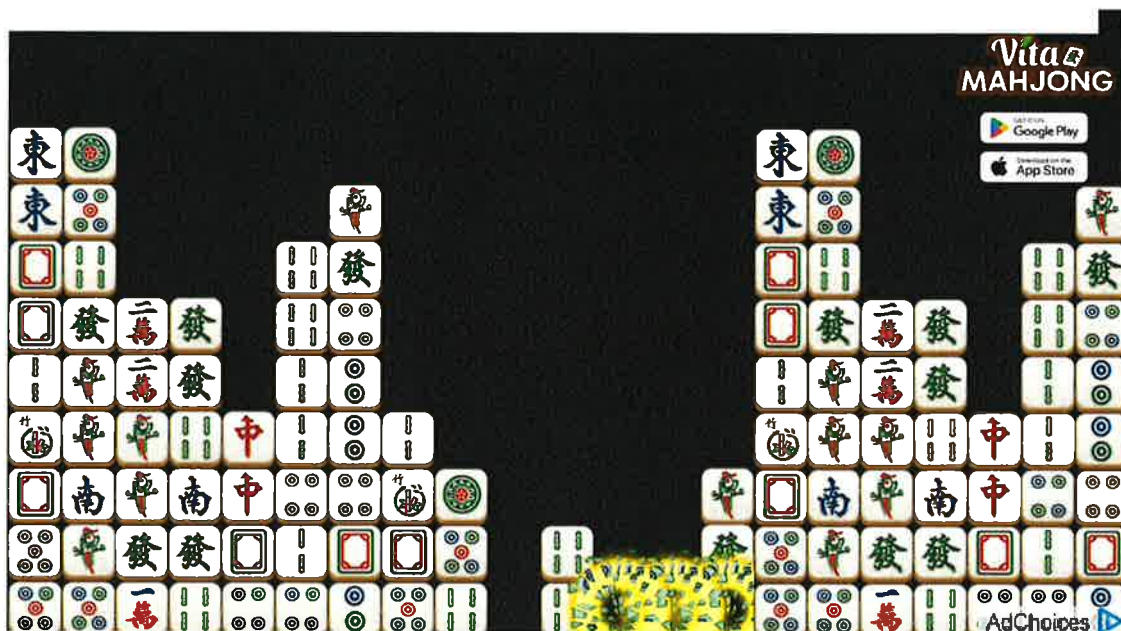
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RIVER BEND, Mo. — A Former River Bend, Missouri trustee is facing a maximum of 12 years in prison for filing false documents in a November special election where she received six votes.

Those six votes were enough to earn a tie in the village with a 2020 census population of three and seventeen registered voters.

Jessica Caswell, 50, is charged with willfully providing false documentation required for voter registration and filing false documents, both Class D felonies.

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“How are these codes being passed, who is doing it, where is this money going?” Michael Schneider asked.

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Others with residential or business connections to River Bend Missouri also had of how the board making decisions about a proposed marijuana based entertainment district was appointed or formed.

The village said through a letter in October the Board of Trustees was appointed by the previous board and believed themselves to be the only residents in the 2000 acre community north of Independence and Sugar Creek along Missouri 291.

But to ease concerns it decided to have a special election in November. Four candidates tied with six votes a piece for two seats.

“It came to a draw where we actually drew straws on it and I guess I got that,” Schneider

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Daniel Weiss and former Trustee Jessica Caswell, who according to her social media last summer worked for one of the men [behind Smokey River Entertainment District](#), lost that drawing of straws to Schneider as well as James Hoppe. Hoppe is Caswell's husband according to a marriage license.

Election records show both live in building that resembles a warehouse behind town hall. Caswell is now charged with willfully providing false documentation required for voter registration and filing false documents. According to the grand jury indictment she knew she didn't meet the residency requirement.

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"People have said a long time ago that there were actually people living in this building over here, that's not true, nobody lives there," said Schneider who lives in a RV parked alongside one of the buildings in the industrial community.

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Schneider believes after his wife's death last month, he and his son are the village's only actual full-time residents.

"We're going to dig and we're going to dig hard."

He says he's frustrated by the former trustee making headlines. Caswell's bond was set at \$15,000. Under conditions of her bond she is not allowed to have contact with other trustees except her spouse.

"It definitely is a black eye for us it puts us on the spotlight right away. Like really what's going on? But I'm here to tell you I'm not going to fold. I'm not going to be corrupt. I'm going to do things right and I'm going to help River Bend," Schneider said.

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In October a River Bend Planning and Zoning member resigned and Smokey River also withdrew its redevelopment plans. A spokesperson for the entertainment district said she was unavailable for comment at the moment and then didn't return calls seeking comment.

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