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Purcellville, Virginia

Nett Refuses Plea Offer from Special Prosecutor Eric Olsen

Proposed agreement would have dismissed all felony charges against Nett and Town Manager Kwasi Fraser in exchange for unrelated misdemeanor guilty plea, resignation from Town Council, and a one-year prohibition on holding public office in Loudoun County.

PURCELLVILLE, VA — Stafford County Commonwealth's Attorney Eric Olsen, appointed Special Prosecutor upon the recommendation of Loudoun County Commonwealth's Attorney Bob Anderson, to handle matters related to Purcellville, offered a plea agreement to Purcellville Vice Mayor Carl “Ben” Nett and Town Manager Kwasi Fraser.

On July 23, 2025, a special grand jury convened by Olsen indicted Nett on four felony counts of computer trespass, stemming from allegations that Nett improperly accessed law enforcement databases to obtain information about political opponents. Separately, the grand jury indicted Nett and Fraser on one felony count of fraudulent commercial dealing and one felony count of conspiracy related to alleged bid rigging involving a \$12,000 contract for a police-management study.

Both men have consistently maintained their innocence and denied any criminal wrongdoing. They contend that the prosecutions are politically motivated and arise from a broader conflict over the results of Purcellville's 2024 municipal election and promised reforms to town government.

On October 1, 2026, less than four weeks before Nett's scheduled trial on the Virginia Criminal Information Network (VCIN) charges, Olsen proposed a plea agreement through Nett's attorney, Ryan Campbell.

Under the proposed agreement, Olsen would dismiss all six felony charges against Nett and both felony charges against Fraser. In exchange, Nett would plead guilty to a single misdemeanor violation of Virginia's State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act, an offense for which Nett has not been criminally charged. The agreement would include no active jail time, conditioned upon one year of good behavior, and require Nett to resign from Town Council and refrain from holding any elected or appointed position in Loudoun County for one year.

Nett has rejected the proposed agreement, maintaining that he is innocent of all criminal wrongdoing.

“I will not plead guilty to a crime I did not commit, and which I have not been charged with, in order to make six felony charges that I have been framed with magically go away,” said Nett.

Nett notes that Loudoun County Commonwealth's Attorney Bob Anderson, a friend of Olsen, publicly accused Nett of violating the State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act on April 21, 2025. Nett disputed that accusation and subsequently filed a Complaint for Declaratory Judgment challenging Anderson's interpretation of the law.

According to Nett, Anderson's three-part legal analysis conflicted with Virginia law and the interpretations offered by both the Executive Director of the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council and the Purcellville Town Attorney. Nett maintains that Anderson subsequently retreated from his original position following the filing of the lawsuit.

Anderson is currently suing Nett and the Town of Purcellville for \$10 million, claiming “Defamation” following Nett’s public disclosure of Anderson’s role in placing Nett on his office’s Brady List for minor, disputed, alleged administrative violations—all of which were found by unanimous decision of a Grievance Panel to be unfounded and politically motivated, and ordered to be reversed. What’s more, Anderson placed Nett on his Brady List prior to the exhaustion of Nett’s due process rights.

Nett says that the proposed plea agreement from Olsen, which would require him to admit to an uncharged offense he disputes while surrendering his elected office, raises serious questions about the relationship between the criminal prosecution and the ongoing political disputes in Purcellville.

“I took an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic,” Nett said. “I was willing to give my life in defense of the President of the United States as a member of the Secret Service. I was willing to give my life in Afghanistan, pursuing al Qaeda with the CIA. If necessary, I’ll give my life on the streets of Virginia, before I plead guilty to a crime I did not commit and thus provide legal and political cover to individuals who, themselves, I believe, are guilty of federal civil rights violations.”

Upcoming Trial and Connections Among Officials

Nett's trial on the four computer-trespass charges is scheduled to begin October 26, 2026, eight days before the November 3 election.

Nett says that the entire state police investigation into him was predicated on a complaint from Erin Rayner, now a candidate for Purcellville Mayor, who accused Nett of “malfeasance, destruction of documents, and assault.” Those wild allegations and Rayner's precise role are yet to be investigated. Nett further notes it was Rayner who served as the sole source of allegations relied upon by investigators to justify sustained charges against Nett related to his attendance at a conference while on sick leave (Nett incurred a knee injury that precluded him from driving). Those sustained allegations were among those overturned by the aforementioned Grievance Panel.

Nett also points to a series of documented political and professional relationships among individuals connected to the broader controversy.

Rayner served as campaign manager for Nicole Wittmann during Wittmann's unsuccessful 2019 campaign for Loudoun County Commonwealth's Attorney. Wittmann subsequently served as Virginia's Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Justice and Public Safety before returning to Loudoun County as Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney under Bob Anderson.

When Wittmann left the Attorney General's Office, she was succeeded in that senior criminal-justice position by her friend, Theo Stamos, the former Arlington County Commonwealth's Attorney who had also lost her reelection bid in 2019. Wittmann and Stamos therefore share professional ties through the Virginia Attorney General's Office, while Rayner and Wittmann share a political relationship dating to at least the 2019 Loudoun County election.

Nett further questions whether Wittmann had any involvement in referring allegations against him to Stamos or other state authorities. He has not established that such a referral occurred, and the existence of these professional and political relationships does not, by itself, demonstrate improper coordination or misconduct.

Nett maintains that the relationships, the origins of the criminal referrals, and the decision-making processes behind the investigation and prosecution warrant independent examination. He argues that public confidence in the impartial administration of justice requires transparency about who initiated the allegations, who participated in subsequent referrals, and whether any officials with prior political or professional relationships influenced prosecutorial decisions.

Nett continues to call for an independent federal review of potential civil rights violations and maintains that the pending criminal charges should be resolved on their evidence and legal merits, rather than through an agreement requiring him to relinquish elected office.

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