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SECTION: NEWS; Pg. NaN**LENGTH:** 780 words**HEADLINE:** PAC fights Shelby mayor's campaign**BYLINE:** JAMI KINTON**DATELINE:** SHELBY**BODY:**

Scott Pullins said chances of his continuing to go after the City of Shelby in court are slim, but that hasn't stopped him from going after the mayor in the political arena.

The Mount Vernon attorney represents Critical Life **EMS**, a private ambulance service owned by Jason Dotson, in a civil lawsuit filed Sept. 8 against Shelby Mayor Bill Freytag, members of City Council and other Shelby officials.

Critical Life **EMS** had the city contract for service before Sept. 8 -- the day council authorized Freytag to award that contract to Mansfield Ambulance. The suit, which also names as defendants Shelby's law director, finance director and fire chief, makes a number of charges in connection with what Pullins sees as a breach of contract.

An extension of a temporary restraining order Pullins requested at the suit's outset -- which kept the city from entering into the contract with Mansfield Ambulance -- was declined Oct. 7 by Richland County Common Pleas Judge James Henson.

In other words, the city's contract with a new ambulance provider is a done deal: Mansfield Ambulance has a one-year contract, with the option of four one-year renewals.

"Right now we have to decide whether to take this to court or not," Pullins said Friday. "It's not that likely we will right now, but I'd say there's a higher chance we'd do a breach of contract suit with the city."

In the meantime, Pullins and Dotson on Thursday launched the political action committee Shelby Truth PAC, sponsored by Critical Life, to oppose Freytag's campaign for re-election in November.

Freytag, the incumbent in a three-way race, is running as a write-in candidate.

Pullins declined to say how many people are involved in Shelby Truth PAC, but PullinsReport.com -- a Web site connected with the Mount Vernon man's law firm announcing the committee's formation -- indicates a number of businesses and residents in Richland County are part of the group.

In addition to questioning the mayor's role in the city's new ambulance service contract, Shelby Truth PAC also charges that Freytag broke his promise not to seek election this year. The group also blasts the mayor's recent veto of an ordinance permitting prayer before council meetings.

"I'm no legal expert like the law director, but it's clear to me that the U.S. Supreme Court has said this type of prayer is constitutional," Dotson, of Mansfield, said in a news release. "It's unfortunate that Mayor Freytag would rather listen to the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) than the good citizens of Shelby, Ohio."

Freytag responded Friday by questioning the group's motives, pointing out that Pullins works in Mount Vernon in Knox County.

"Pullins is only trying to sabotage my campaign," he said. "He has no connection to Shelby except through Critical Life. It's just sour grapes that they didn't get that contract."

As for the prayer ordinance, Freytag previously cited concerns about the measure being unconstitutional, which could have led

to a lawsuit.

Dotson, Critical Life's president and CEO, said he was disappointed in the court ruling that allowed Shelby to sign on with a different ambulance service.

"Our company bids contracts all the time, but I've never been in a process this questionable," he said Friday.

According to Pullins, Critical Life's contract with the city -- entered on Oct. 1, 2008 -- was a five-year deal.

Freytag said the contract was only a one-year agreement, with the option of four one-year renewals, and the contract was not renewed after the first year.

Freytag said the decision came down to the rates. According to his numbers, Shelby taxpayers requiring medical care will save 39 percent for advanced life support, 44 percent for basic life support and 11 percent per mile with Mansfield Ambulance Service versus Critical Life.

Freytag said Critical Life also enforced surcharges for EKGs, which Mansfield Ambulance does not.

However, the city's switch last year from its traditional use of five-year contracts to one-year renewables may play a role if Critical Life pursues its case in court.

"On Oct. 1, 2008, the same day we awarded Critical Life the contract, the safety committee decided we would no longer have a subsidized contract like we'd always had in the past," Freytag said, explaining why the five-year deals were nixed.

"We still believe we had a five-year contract and that issue has never really been litigated," Pullins said.

Dotson said the loss of the Shelby contract hasn't affected his company severely.

"The contract was to receive 9-1-1 calls, which averaged about 2.2 per day in Shelby," he said. "We still get calls from customers who call us directly and from other areas."

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