

## Tweeting can continue from Shelby Co. Commission meetings

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Channel 5



Commissioner Carpenter's original tweet.

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MEMPHIS, TN (WMC-TV) - The question of whether or not commissioners should be allowed to use Twitter during Shelby County Commission meetings escalated Monday into a battle over distraction versus free speech.

Shelby County Commissioner Terry Roland proposed an ordinance that would ban tweets, texts, calls, and internet access during commission meetings.

"We don't need to be doing this while we're on the county's time," he said.

The Twitter war began weeks ago, when Commissioner Wyatt Bunker ribbed Roland during a discussion about banning the sale of roadside animals in Millington.

As usual, Commissioner Mike Carpenter, a prolific Twitter user, tweeted about the exchange. It read, "Comm Roland discussing situation in Millington where person selling pit bulls. Comm Bunker: "Don't they eat those in Millington?"

Later, Bunker said his comment was lost in translation, and he was poking fun at Roland, not Millington.

But the tweet didn't end there. It was re-tweeted, complained about and commented on. Someone even made a jab at the mayor of Millington at an area civic club, apologizing that there was no dog on the menu.

Monday, Bunker made his feelings about Roland's proposal clear.

"Commissioner, I just want to say that I'm in favor of this solution. Thank you," he said.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Mike Carpenter tweeted about it, and Commissioner Steve Mulroy used humor to show support for meeting tweeting, adopting an Elmer Fudd speech style.

"I may occasionally 'tweat' myself to a nice chocolwate or strawbewwy stwudel," he said. "But as it is, I don't tweet myself. But I weawwy, weawwy wike it if people have the right to tweet themselves."

In the end, commissioners voted down Roland's attempt to silence the tweeting commissioner, by a vote of 6 to 4.