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## **Coronavirus in Oklahoma: Officer admits posting Facebook threat against Norman mayor**

by Tim Willert

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NORMAN — A Lexington police officer accused of threatening Norman Mayor Breea Clark on Facebook admitted to "writing and posting" the comment, Norman police reported Friday afternoon.

"The individual responsible for the comment admitted to writing and posting it on social media," police spokeswoman Sarah Jensen said in a news release. "Police investigators found no indication of a direct threat to public safety."

Police began investigating after Clark reported the Facebook post, which read: "Mayor (expletive), needs to be pulled out of office and tried on the court house lawn...the problem with politicians, they don't get hung in public anymore...#bringbackpublicchangings!" The comment investigated by police was attributed to Eddie Zaicek, a police officer in nearby Lexington who acknowledged being part of the "Re-Open Norman" group but initially denied posting the comment, saying his account had been hacked.

Norman investigators presented their findings to Cleveland County District Attorney Greg Mashburn's office, which determined charges could not be filed following a thorough review of the investigation, the release stated.

"Based on Oklahoma State Statute, the communication was not a direct threat," the release stated. "Further, the social media posting was determined to be communication protected by the First Amendment."

Clark has come under fire for her order in Oklahoma's third-largest city that prevents large gatherings inside places of worship. She and city council members Kate Bierman and Sereta Wilson have been criticized on a "Re-Open Norman" Facebook page.

In a statement issued Thursday, Clark said none of her decisions "were made with the intent to hurt residents or businesses." She observed that "people are scared, depressed, and even angry right now," and that she appeared "to be an outlet for those volatile emotions. We'll get through this, and when we do, I hope those residents find some peace."

"With that said, I will not hesitate to report death threats, especially when they come from people who are supposed to be protecting residents, not encouraging them to hang people on courthouse lawns," her statement concluded.

Zaicek's work status was not immediately known. A person who answered the phone at the Lexington Police Department declined to answer questions about the officer and said to call back Monday morning to speak to the interim chief.

Reached Friday, Zaicek declined to comment when asked if he was still employed by the Lexington Police Department.

"I'm sorry, I can't divulge any information pertaining to the case, even though I have been completely exonerated," he said in a text.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.