

Activist Rus Thompson indicted on voter fraud charge

By Michael Canfield

NEWS STAFF

on June 13, 2016 - 9:12 PM, updated June 13, 2016 at 9:31 PM

Political activist Rus Thompson has been indicted for voter fraud by an Erie County grand jury, he revealed on his Facebook page Monday.

Thompson, who rejected a plea offer from the Erie County District Attorney's Office in May, posted the letter he received from acting District Attorney Michael J. Flaherty Jr. on his Facebook page Monday afternoon.

Thompson's wife, Jul Thompson, also posted the letter to the "Support Rus Thompson" Facebook page.

"Seriously?? I thought the grand jury would have a little more sense than the idiot DA," she wrote in the post. In the letter, Flaherty writes that the grand jury returned an indictment on Thompson last Thursday.

Thompson is due in court in front of State Supreme Court Justice Penny M. Wolfgang at 2 p.m. Thursday for arraignment.

In a second Facebook post Monday afternoon, Thompson railed against the local Republican establishment.

"The Grand Island Republicans and the Erie County Republican leadership should feel proud of what they are doing to my family," he wrote.

When asked to comment on the case Monday, Thompson simply said, "See you in court."

Thompson was charged in early May with one count of false registration and using that false registration to vote in both the Grand Island primary and general elections in 2015. A onetime Grand Island resident, Thompson now resides in Niagara Falls.

At his court appearance before State Supreme Court Justice Christopher J. Burns on May 13, Thompson rejected a plea offer from the District Attorney's Office.

At the time, Thompson's defense attorney, Thomas J. Eoannou said the plea included the possibility of up to four years in prison.

"A felony disposition of this case is inappropriate," he said then.

Thompson claimed in April that former Grand Island Supervisor Mary S. Cooke deleted over 1,700 files before she left office at the end of her term. Thompson was a vocal critic of Cooke over the file deletion, when news of the deleted files became public.

"To me, it's a crime," he said then.

Thompson also pushed for an investigation by the District Attorney's Office and the New York State Attorney General's Office into the matter. He said he never heard back.

Thompson has also been involved in current Supervisor Nathan D. McMurray's push to have the Grand Island tolls removed.