

## NEWS

# Homophobic, sexist, anti-white language abundant in Charlottesville vice mayor's tweets

Wes Bellamy's tweets contrast with other published messages of unity, empowerment

By Anna Higgins and Tim Dodson | 11/28/2016



Charlottesville Vice Mayor Wes Bellamy  
Courtesy City of Charlottesville

*This article contains language some may find offensive. All tweets attributed to Bellamy have been quoted as written.*

*The article has been updated to note Bellamy is now on administrative leave from Albemarle County Public Schools.*

Charlottesville Vice Mayor Wes Bellamy published several tweets between 2009 and 2014 using gay slurs, comments against white people, lewd slang for female genitalia and other profanities. Many of the old tweets show a stark contrast between his more recent posts lauding women's and LGBTQ rights. Bellamy made his Twitter account private this Saturday.

The tweets surfaced on social media after local blogger Jason Kessler posted criticism of the tweets on Nov. 24. The post led some members of the community to call on Bellamy to leave office.

In an October 2011 tweet, Bellamy answered a question prompted by another user, "Does it make males uncomfortable wen girls are so upfront about sex??" with "It only makes faggots uncomfortable ..."

The anti-gay slur also appears in tweets about the number of times someone has sex and having a clean house.



These tweets contrast with Bellamy's tweet pushing for unity immediately following the mass shooting at Orlando gay nightclub Pulse in June, which left 49 dead.

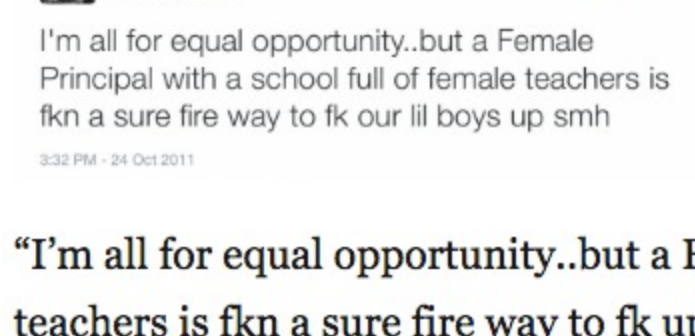
"I don't care if you're gay, straight, trams, black, white, blue, or purple ... YOU DESERVE EQUAL RIGHTS AND YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE!"

Bellamy tweeted on June 13.

In November 2015 Bellamy was elected to the City Council, which selected him as the city's vice mayor at the start of their term in January.

Bellamy unsuccessfully ran for City Council in 2013, and works as a computer science teacher at Albemarle High School. Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed Bellamy to the State Board of Education in March.

In October 2011, Bellamy tweeted about the prevalence of female teachers in schools and how it may negatively affect male students.



"I'm all for equal opportunity..but a Female Principal with a school full of female teachers is fkn a sure fire way to fk up our lil boys smh," he tweeted.

Tweets that expressed criticism of white people led Kessler to label Bellamy as an "anti-white racist."

"I DONT LIK WHIT PEOPLE SO I HATE WHITE SNOW!!!! FML!!!!" he tweeted in Dec. 2009.

Other tweets compared white women to the devil and criticized the appearance of white women in sundresses.

Virginia Flaggers, a group which **has opposed removing statues of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson** from Lee Park and Jackson Park, respectively, urged people to contact City Council and "demand he be removed from office" in a Facebook post Saturday.

Bellamy responded to his critics in a Facebook post Sunday evening.

"I am not a black supremacist, a racist, a misogynist nor am I any of the other things [Kessler] purports me to be," Bellamy said. "What I am is a son, a husband, a father, a teacher and a proud member of this community who works every day to improve the city we live in."

Another one of Bellamy's tweets from October 2011 commented, "word..." on a tweet describing sexual assault.



"Word...RT: TAXSTONE: Eat it while she asleep if she moan it aint rape," the retweet read.

Several tweets also linked white women to rape accusations, and one retweet said white women "smell like future assault charges n deli meat."



Other tweets from 2009 explicitly described sex acts using vulgar terms to describe women's genitals.



More recent tweets, however, show support for women's empowerment, including links to Instagram photos supporting the Sexual Assault Resource Agency and a mentoring program for young African-American women.

Following the publication of the now-debunked Rolling Stone article, "A Rape On Campus," in November 2014, Bellamy called for people to stand up against rape culture.

Bellamy has also called for racial unity in recent tweets.



Bellamy explained he has learned since posting the tweets.

"I sincerely apologize for the inappropriate things I posted to social media many years ago," Bellamy said in his Facebook post. "Elected officials should be held to a higher standard, and while I was not in office at the time, in this instance I came up short of the man I aspire to be."

He attributed the tweets to an immature phase of his life.

"At the time of the tweets that I saw posted on the website, I was a young man in my early 20s living outside the Deep South for the first time," Bellamy said. "In the course of trying to mature and find my way I came to some false conclusions about the world around me and made them known."

Bellamy is from Atlanta, Georgia. Prior to moving to Charlottesville in 2009, he attended South Carolina State University.

He noted that since the tweets were published, he has furthered his education, become a father and gotten married.

Bellamy also serves as vice president of the 100 Black Men of Central Virginia and is president of the Young Black Professional Network of Charlottesville and the Charlottesville/Albemarle Alliance of Black School Educators, according to his biography on the City Council website.

Bellamy was unavailable for an interview Sunday evening.

In a statement released Tuesday, Albemarle County School Board Chair Kate Acuff said the language in the postings "directly contradicts the values of our school division."

"The School Board rejects these statements in their entirety," she said.

The school divisions is investigating the tweets and Bellamy is now on administrative leave.

"We are working to completely gather all of the facts in this matter," the statement said. "As is standard procedure while an investigation is underway, and in the best interests of all who are involved, we agree with Mr. Bellamy's decision to take administrative leave until such time as our investigation has been completed."

The Cavalier Daily reached out to City Council members and the governor's office Sunday evening and will update this article with any responses.