

## MOVAC – CAVE People are Constituents Too

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**MOVAC Contributor: Sean P. Keefe**

At the County Commission meeting on January 30, 2025, many citizens of Wood County attended in order to understand why the newly-erected Resiliency Center was not used as a warming center during the recently-experienced Polar Vortex. The details of that meeting and the contentious interactions experienced can be found in our previously-published article linked below.

[Resiliency Center Not Used for Polar Vortex](#) – MOVAC January 31, 2025

During that meeting, the president of the commission made it perfectly clear that he was not accountable to those in attendance. The following is an excerpt from the above-referenced article:

...Taj Rohr followed up on an exchange Mr. Couch was having with Roger Conley regarding a purported phone call and Mr. Couch responded, “Taj, I’m not going to be put on the witness stand here.”

Taj Rohr, “You’re not going to be accountable to the people you work for is what you’re saying.”

“Yeah, because I don’t think a single one of you voted for me. You all voted for him,” Mr. Couch said as he pointed at Roger Conley.

Again, the room erupted with one attendee saying, “You only represent the people who voted for you?”

During that meeting, Mr. Couch invited everyone to come to the grand opening of the Resiliency Center on February 4, 2025. Many took him up on that offer. I attended briefly in order to give a requested interview with WTAP. Also at the opening was WCHS out of Charleston. They had interviewed Taj Rohr earlier in the day and attended the opening to, in part, provide Mr. Couch with an opportunity to respond to the uproar from citizens regarding the intended uses of the new facility.

The entire report from WCHS is linked below, but the most salient point made by Mr. Couch is excerpted below and only bolstered his views expressed at the January 30 County Commission meeting.

Wood County Commission president Blair Couch said. "I'm sure they called you a bunch. There's a whole group of them. They're just C.A.V.E. people: Citizens Against Virtually Everything and they were against this."

[Opening of \\$13M Wood County Resiliency Center raises controversy in Parkersburg](#) – WCHS  
February 4, 2025

Isn't that cute? I suppose that since we have an acronym here at MOVAC, he thought it would be witty to come up with his own – CAVE: Citizens Against Virtually Everything.

That is the leadership of Wood County.

I would like to remind Mr. Couch that our 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to the Constitution protects (not gives) our right "to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

### Constitution of the United States

#### First Amendment

First Amendment Explained

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

Source – [Constitution.Congress.Gov](https://www.congress.gov)

Whether he realizes it or not, he is the government. We have every right to petition him in his official capacity when we believe it is needed. We are not at every meeting and not everyone at that meeting is associated with MOVAC.

Jaycee Ballard attended the grand opening and came away dumbfounded after a one-on-one exchange with Mr. Couch where he had no answers to the questions she had asked at the January 30 meeting and which were asked again at the grand opening:

In response to receiving no clear answers, Jaycee Ballard said, "We should just change the name to Convention Center."

To which Jaycee Ballard said Mr. Couch replied, "I'd love to. I'm not the one who named it. The architects did."

Is it any wonder the facility is for property owners and not the homeless? Were the taxpayers sold a facility for emergencies only to placate the peasants – while the real plan was a meeting place/convention center?

I can't answer what is in someone's heart. I can only lament the disdain with which the president of our County Commission treats those he was elected to serve. I don't know how many residents of Wood County Mr. Couch believes are CAVE people, but I cannot imagine many appreciate this type of leadership.

Linked below is the report posted by WTAP and the full interview recorded by MOVAC. I apologize for the sound quality of the recording. It was quite windy outside of the new facility. I would also note that I mistakenly referred to the resiliency center when I meant recovery centers as I was expressing concern for where some of our homeless may be originating. Please turn on the closed captioning function in YouTube to help understand some of the interview.

[A Wood County resident shares his thoughts on the new Resiliency Center](#) – WTAP February 4, 2025

[Wood County Resiliency Center Interview](#) – MOVAC YouTube February 6, 2025