

# GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY OF SOUTH FULTON

## Office of the City Manager

khalid kamau  
MAYOR



TAMMI SADDLER JONES  
CITY MANAGER

Date: May 3, 2022

To: Tammi Saddler Jones, City Manager

From: Tanesha Niki Graham, Human Resources Director

Re: Hostile Work Environment Notice

After speaking with you today regarding the police investigation, it concerns me that Councilwoman Willis would ask to terminate me for doing my job. Since I started working for the city, I have been loyal, professional, and a hard worker for the City of South Fulton, often working late in the evenings up past midnight, Saturdays, and Sundays, with joy in my heart.

When I started with the city my first day/week of employment I was welcomed to an office, I had to clean, request painted, find suitable furniture, and disinfect, and I did this with a smile on my face excited about the opportunity to work for such a young, promising city.

Never could I have imagined the situation I would find myself in over this past year:

- Employee relations have been out of control since day one, immediately following my hire, I was investigating employee's performance, complaints, terminating employees, and trying to bring employees back into the workplace post 2020 COVID
- I immediately put on an event for the city my first month here on May 14 to celebrate the employees (Employee Appreciation Day).
- I was physically assaulted by an employee- to this day I don't know the outcome of the police report filed with the city. I have called the detective assigned to me but get the run around.
- The two employees I had in the department abruptly quit, reasons given to me by the employees were unrelated to me, (one wanted to be a HR Director, and the other never wanted to work in HR)
- I had to hire and train new staff, while trying to learn how the city operated.
- Excitedly, I took on other positions into my department, to help organize and align the practices of the following positions: risk manager, payroll manager, and the payroll and benefits coordinator.
- I reorganized my department to create a career path for the department and streamline the duties and HR functions throughout the department.

- I also started to build rapport with departments not located in city hall, (fire stations, parks, and code enforcement), by visiting each department with my new staff and providing breakfast.
- I ordered shoes for the city to start up our wellness program and get employees excited about wellness.
- You needed me to start the environmental phase study and indemnification insurance and without hesitation I took it on, letting you know I had it, and I picked up the dropped ball of the risk manager and ran with it, leading the team towards finishing the process of Wolf Creek Amphitheater while giving up my vacation days, working up to December 31, 2021, so the then Mayor would get credit.
- I recognize diversity in Hispanic Month (lunch provided and a mariachi band)
- While remaining optimistic about my decision to join the city, I tolerated countless false rumors about me as a person (Councilwoman Willis told me I was friends with the then Councilman Khalid and knew him prior, I was denying my staff of their lunches, training, and despite all the good mentioned above, I was charged by Councilwoman Willis as not motivating or engaging the employees, not being approachable, etc.
- You even doubted my performance, when an employee in my department, told you myself and the HR manager violated their rights with FMLA, only to find out that was false, I get it you have your motto (inspect what you expect), however; this only created more doubt and lack of trust with HR.
- I have had to deal with the constant disrespect of the Police Chief with his false accusations, each ending with meaningless apologies, until the next time he insults me. (After I disagreed with his decision to hire a husband-and-wife command team, the bullying started), yet he wonders why the employees in his department do not trust the IA process. I told him from the start and documented it with you verbally and in writing. a) his selected choice in my opinion was not the strongest interviewee, b) if he hired a married couple in both high positions as Majors on his command team, the employees will not trust that decision.
- None the less, I continued to do my best and in December my team put on an all-inclusive employee holiday party, which received rave reviews, from employees and council.
- Council speaks about how the employees are the subject matter experts, however it took three months to approve HR handbook edits, each council meeting I would receive a different request (not mentioned prior) and in the end, ended up meeting with each one in a small group, and yet they still waited until the council meeting to humiliate me, by once again questioning if they should vote the policies in. I stood alone against their firing squad, defending policies asked for in conversations by you and them.
- I am often stopped by Council's constituents who provide me with praise in a job well done, and to offer their compassion for the embarrassment, and provide encouraging words of how they appreciate and notice my hard work and the city's improvements.
- I negotiated savings for benefits, recognized the need for a new broker and HRIS system, and made it happen, while sealing a deal that would save us money (credits for errors from the current HRIS is helping to pay for the new HRIS ADP)

- Most recently, I have been a key player in our union negotiations and actively participating to help reach a happy medium for the city.
- Since, I have been here I have been asked to represent the city as a facilitator with UGA Newly Elected Officials Orientation.

This list is not an all-inclusive list, but it paints the picture of the dedication I have given this city as I promised I would from the day I started. Have there been learning opportunities, yes of course, like any new undeveloped process, we learn and improve together, or at least we should.

Where am I going with all the mentioned above? I was dishearten to know that someone in the city that recently praised my work, now wants me unjustifiably fired and for what. I believe this request to fire me comes from the request of the Police Chief and the investigation of his and his wife's prodigy. Employees in the police department came to HR in accordance with the *HR Policies and Procedure (see appendix)* to investigate their claims of a hostile, bullying, and threatening work environment in the police department. They mentioned having complained prior to me and nothing was done. I reached out to you and Chief Meadows from the beginning advising him of the procedures of the investigation, at which time he agreed and welcomed HR to investigate. The investigation covered more than the original complaints, the HR team sought out direction for legal (internally, externally), city manager, and assistance city manager. The investigation has taken a while for varies reasons (started over the holiday season, uprise in COVID cases in January, and several meetings schedule with all parties, and reviews/conversations on next steps). In the end under the advisement of legal, you were presented with options for an internal or external investigation process to continue this investigation due to the accusations brough forward, and you agreed and together with me and Hope, HR Manager, we met with Chief Meadows. Once more he insulted the ability of HR to perform an investigation, and he agreed to allow you to take the investigation to an external investigator. We all agreed that to give the complaints a fair opportunity to be heard, and the accused the chance to clear their name, an external process would be fair.

I am in utter shock that my job is now being threaten. Chief Meadows continues to demonstrate his bullying tactics repeatedly in emails and in conversations to me. You have had to correct his behavior towards me twice, according to you, you had a private conversation with him, and after I submitted a formal complaint to him, you, and Don Toms on December 29, 2021, you schedule a team meeting on December 30, 2021.

Now he is apparently using his relationship with Councilwoman Willis to get me fired, which now makes sense why early January 2022, you mentioned Councilwoman Willis was upset with my performance over the exiting of Mayor Edwards, even though once more I did my job and professionally. I now believe her issue with me was not about Mayor Edwards but the complaint I made against Chief Meadows (retaliation). It aligns to the event on December 29, 2021, whenever Chief Meadows is mad or displease with me, so is Councilwoman Willis.

Councilwoman Willis and Chief Meadows are creating a hostile, intimidating work environment to scare me from doing my job as it relates to investigations or any interactions with his department. I have evidence in emails from Chief Meadows clearly interfering with the investigation process (asking for a list of employees and forcing the subjects to work together amidst the investigation- without advising HR) which is a violation of the *HR Policies and Procedures (see appendix)*, I brought this to your attention several times, and nothing has been done.

Finally, the city recently adopted the Healthy Workplace Ordinance ORD2022-009.

I am filing an official complaint that the behavior of Councilwoman Willis and Chief Meadows is a violation of Section 2-6010.2 Prohibited Conduct.

**Chief Meadows:**

The sabotage of undermining of an employee's work performance, intimidating,

3: Hostile and humiliating remarks of professional disqualification

**Councilwoman Willis**

3: Hostile and humiliating remarks of professional disqualification

4: The unjustified threats of dismissal.

This is to name a few of the most egregious of the offenses, but a lot more could apply. I am requesting an investigation by legal outside of the council and city's attorney, due to influences of both these individuals. I am fearful of the Chief for myself and family that may visit the city and could interact with police under Chief Meadows leadership. I am also fearful of termination resulting for the retaliation of writing this notice.

I had a plan vacation for the next couple of days and instead I am spending my evening documenting my occurrences with the City of South Fulton's leadership and council. This has disturbed me so much so that I have reached out to the city's EAP provider for counseling to help ease the anxiety and the insomnia I am experiencing. I tried to speak to you over the phone after our conversation in which you told me your job was being threaten if you didn't fire me, I didn't feel like you felt the urgency in speaking with me. I do not know what you expected me to do with that information, but not being able to discuss it further, left me feeling uncertain and doubtful of fair treatment.

I am also requesting to change my time off from vacation to sick leave, because I have been emotionally traumatized from this grave concern and will seek therapy during this time away.

## Appendix

Per HR Policies and Procedures

### **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND PREJUDICIAL ACTS**

Number: 106-18

Investigation Procedures For HR:

#### II. Applicability

This policy applies to all City employees, department heads and elected or appointed officials hired by the City and paid by the City Finance Department including part-time, non-regular appointed employees, interns and contractors doing business with City. This policy also protects citizens doing business with the City.

Any employee or other covered individual who believes he or she may have been subjected to discrimination, harassment or retaliation in violation of this policy, may file an Internal Discrimination Complaint with Human Resources.

### **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND ANTI-BULLYING**

Number: 119 -18

#### IV. Reporting and Investigating

All employees shall promptly report workplace violence or bullying to their supervisors and/or Department Head in accordance with the City's procedures. In an emergency, employees may report workplace violence to supervisory or managerial level employees other than their own supervisors. Upon receipt of a report of workplace violence or bullying, the supervisor and/or Department Head shall immediately refer the matter to the Human Resources Director for investigation. In addition, where it is an employee's supervisor or Department Head who has engaged in threatening, violent, intimidating or other abusive behavior, the employee does not have to report the behavior to their immediate supervisor or go through their supervisory chain of command. Rather, in such a circumstance, an employee is specifically authorized to bypass his/her supervisor (and supervisory chain of command) and report such conduct or behavior directly to the Human Resources Director.

It is the Human Resources Director's responsibility to oversee the investigation of all reported incidents involving workplace abuse, intimidation, or violence and report findings to the Department Head (or his/her designee) who shall take immediate action as appropriate. Such investigation shall commence as soon as practicable and supervisors and Department Heads are required to take reasonable steps to protect the alleged victim(s), including, but not limited to, separation of the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s).

#### V. Victim(s) of Violence and Bullying

Any employee who feels he or she has been victimized by bullying and/or workplace violence is encouraged to report the matter to his or her supervisor or **Department Head or to the Human Resources Department**. Where appropriate, an investigation will be undertaken and disciplinary measures will be taken as necessary by the Department Head or his or her designee.

#### **WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND ANTI-BULLYING**

##### IV. Reporting and Investigating

**It is expected that Department Heads and supervisors will not impede in the process of the investigation. Any attempts to hinder the investigation may result in disciplinary actions, up to and including, termination.**