

***Roosevelt S Lodge***

September 15, 2013

Mr. Jerry Coalson  
City Administrator  
City of Waynesboro  
628 Myrick Street  
Waynesboro, GA 30830

RE: Appeals Notification

Dear Mr. Coalson,

I formally request an appeal of my termination. If I am denied I am requesting to go before the council for the formal appeal.

Now I would like to address the issues brought forth in my termination letter.

Issue number one: My termination letter first states that Chief Palmer asked me to meet with him in his office on Wednesday September 11, 2013 which I did. He stated in the letter that the purpose of the meeting was to "discuss complaints that he had received." He stated that due to those complaints, he had requested an internal affairs investigation be conducted on me to determine if I was or was not in fact working an "unapproved" secondary employment (which was not enforced until he chose to enforce it now for what I feel was a personal vendetta against me). This is a vendetta which he has had since taking his position as chief. He made no effort to enforce this with me either written or verbally. He stated he had "received several complaints" that I have been receiving rent payments from tenants of the Shaw's (whom my wife works for as their property account manager). I would like to see those complaints for myself and find how they came to the attention of the chief.

The fact of the matter is simply this; the tenants who drop off their rent at the police station, or who call me to pick it up from them, have been allowed to do this as a convenience to them as most do not have checking accounts and pay by cash. I asked them not to drop off their payments at the police station and to mail it because the chief suggested that not be done at police headquarters. However, some of them continued to do so. The chief never gave me a directive but only suggested that I not take these rents. Frankly I saw nothing wrong with this arrangement as this has never been an issue for the past 10 months and has in no way ever affected my duties as Deputy Chief. He then stated he has heard complaints that I assisted the Shaw's with visiting tenants while in uniform in the police vehicle to discuss problems between the tenants and the Shaw's. Once again this information he has is false. The fact of the matter

here is that I met my wife, her contractor and the Shaw's after leaving my office at 1715hrs one day. She had a meeting scheduled at 1730hrs to have her contractor inspect all the rentals in the neighborhood of Chris Circle and determine the amount of work to be done to refurbish each one and give them a quote. My wife asked me to meet her there when I got off work to contribute my opinions regarding the repairs needed as the Shaw's were in need of this information to take to the bank to secure a loan for the work. I met them at 126 Chris Circle where the tenant had a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel trailer parked on the property and was plugged into the home's electrical outlet in the utility room. My wife had already sent the tenants a notice to remove the trailer due to complaints from neighbors that someone was living in it and advised them that it was illegal and a fire hazard. On this particular day, Mr. Shaw saw the trailer for the first time and was not happy. Especially when we all observed that the trailer was dumping its sewer into the ground. The person living in the trailer was the tenant's son who claimed he had been given permission by his mother to be there. The Shaw's told him of their concerns and demanded he move it immediately. The son became argumentative and appeared to want to start a fight with Mr. Shaw by encroaching in his space and puffing up his chest. I very calmly and respectfully told the son to have his mother call my wife when she gets home and they will discuss this issue. My words to him were merely, "thank you and we appreciate your cooperation". There was never any intimidation on my part. This same person filed a false incident report with BCSO claiming I used my authority as a Police Officer to intimidate him on this day. This individual claimed on the report that he was only staying on the property overnight! The fact is he's been there for at least 3 months. The chief asked me to write a statement about it in an effort to "put it behind us". I wrote the statement and gave it to him and a copy to you as well. Apparently this was not good enough as the chief believed his own Deputy Chief was lying and took the word of an obvious liar whose is known to be a little off in the head as I mentioned in the statement. The chief went further to state that he received several other complaints that he was investigating as well. He never shared any of these "so called" complaints with me like any normal Police Chief would and should do. He chose to believe the small town hearsay and start an internal investigation based on rumors instead of the facts and the truth. You knew of this and when I asked you about it, you claimed you knew nothing. I have come to you many times with my concerns about the chief and you ignored me.

Issue number two: When I entered the chief's office per his request on September 11, Chief Palmer did not address these so called "complaints" or tell me anything of their nature as he so implied. He simply handed me a questionnaire that he demanded I fill out and sign. He said it was concerning the "claims" and would allow me the opportunity to explain my actions. There have been no 'Actions' on my part that have anything to do with my job as Deputy Chief. The chief was digging for something to hold against me to further damage my reputation and career. I refused at the time to answer any of the questions until I could consult with you and he got angry. What idiot would ever answer and/or sign anything like this without some type of opinion, especially since I already address the issues and concerns the chief had. The questionnaire (attached) asked questions about my relationship with Shaw Rental Properties. Whether I was working for the Shaw's or not had nothing to do with my employment as a police officer with the Waynesboro Police Department. I had already given a letter of explanation to Chief Palmer explaining my involvement with the Shaw's. He said he continued

an investigation because he got complaints from some of the renters that I was intimidating them for their rents and I was receiving rent payments while on duty. This had already been addressed and I have never intimidated anyone and I told Chief Palmer my wife was in charge of the Shaw's property. We had this conversation enough times for him to know the facts but he insisted that I answer these questions including submitting to a voluntary polygraph exam. I started to read the papers, he told me to sit. I sat for a brief moment and then stood up. I said to him I wasn't going to answer these questions at this time and I would be responding to Jerry's office (city administrator). The chief was sitting at his desk at the time, he abruptly jumped up, and pointed his finger at me stating to me to sit down. As he was doing so, he starting to walk toward me. I then raised my hand, pointing my finger in the air and waiving it from side to side, I said "you don't talk to me like that". I took the papers and started to walk out of his office. The chief, who was face to face with me at that time, told me to fill out the paper. I told him I wasn't going to until I spoke with Jerry. He stood in front of his door preventing me from leaving, shouting "give me back my paper". At that point he was in my face, chest to chest shouting. I told him I wanted to take the paper with me to talk with Jerry. He kept insisting I return the questionnaire. I did what I call a football move to get around him because he was blocking the entire door. I faked one way and went the other way and I was able to slip by. He followed me into my office and in doing so continued to yell "you don't put your finger in my face". I told him, "I didn't put my finger in your face. He was yelling very loudly," give me my paper and you put your finger in my face!" I told him I was going to see the city administrator. He then said if I leave the office I would no longer be the deputy chief. He repeated it twice and at one point called out to Mrs. Johnson, who was sitting in her office to affirm or acknowledge what he was saying. I then requested a copy of the questionnaire and he said he would make me one. I said okay, after I see the city administrator. I got around him again and started toward city hall. Chief Palmer continued to follow me saying if I leave the office I would no longer be deputy chief. After I arrived at the door to city hall, he said if I leave the building, I would no longer be deputy chief. He repeated it again. As I was about to enter city hall, about seven (7) police personnel came running down the hallway from the dispatch area. They said they thought there was a disturbance. I told them everything was fine.

As we got into the city administrators office, you (Mr. Coalson) weren't there. I returned to my office with the questionnaire and the chief still following. When I arrived at my office, I asked the chief to close my door so we could talk this out. The chief demanded I return the questionnaire. I again told him I wanted a copy to show you and my attorney and I wanted to discuss the matter with you first. The chief then snatched the paperwork from my hand, left my office saying in a very loud voice not to put my finger in his face. I waited a brief moment and walked into the chief's office where he then gave me a copy of the paperwork.

I walked over to your (city administrator's) office and found you had returned. I said to you, "Jerry that guy is a nut" and I explained to you exactly what happened. I began telling you what happened and you asked me, "What was the problem with answering the questions?" I told you I had no problem answering the questions but I had already given answers to these questions and I felt this was a witch hunt, they had nothing to do with my job as the deputy chief and I said I wanted to consult with my attorney. You indicated you didn't see a problem

and I told you I would answer after consulting with my attorney. I then told you I was going to see my attorney and I would get back with you. I left your office.

For the number of years I have been here I have never been told I had to ask permission from someone to leave. I am an executive and I have been able to leave in my department vehicle whenever. I am on call 24-7 and I drive my vehicle most of the time because I know I may have to respond at any given moment. No-one ever told me I had to check with the chief to do something. However as a matter of courtesy I sometimes tell the administrative assistant where I am going and when I will return. That's more than the chief does.

As for going to see my attorney, I told **you** I was going to see my attorney. As for going to Evans in my department vehicle, I wasn't aware I needed permission.

As to the charges, there was no insubordination. Number 1, I participated in the investigation by writing a statement. I wasn't aware the "investigation" was ongoing because all Chief Palmer told me was he wanted to put this thing to rest and I asked him if he was putting this to rest, why am I having to answer questions in the form of a poly exam. Number 2, I did not, nor have I ever abandoned my duties. Once again, I do not need permission from you or anyone else prior to leaving my office even though I advised you of my intentions. Since the chiefs actions and behavior were clearly unreasonable I did what was right by going to you, the chief's immediate supervisor because of the disagreement. My choosing to leave the office was an effort to defuse the situation.

This has been an ongoing harassment and hostile work environment brought on by the chief since his arrival. This vendetta and retaliation he holds against me is a direct reaction to my hiring 3 investigators, specifically Sean Cochran, prior to him being hired. From the very beginning, I welcomed him and supported him no matter how difficult he made things. He was the chief and I respected him. He ignores me, never talks about importance police business with me; his whole focus has been to undermine my abilities as a manager. He removed my authority from such things as Georgia Post and others which further created a hostile environment and did not allow me to do my job as the deputy chief of police of this organization as I had been doing for the past two and half years prior to his arrival.

In addition to my appeal, I am respectfully requesting your assistance with obtaining three items I need to support my evidence in my defense. (1)That the WPD's video recording from September 11, 2013 be secured and not destroyed for my viewing as evidence to what truly transpired in the hallways and door ways that morning. I am requesting a copy of that video as well. (2) All copies of all investigations allegedly completed detailing all complaints mentioned/received. (3) To obtain files with further supportive evidence from my office computer. I can assist you with the retrieval of these files.

I welcome a sit down with you at any time to answer any questions you may have, to provide names of witnesses that would be useful to you during the course of your investigation and to

provide documentary evidence to you that will support my cause. I will eagerly await word from you in this regard or you may contact my attorney.

Roosevelt S. Lodge

CC: C. Scott Connell/Attorney at Law  
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