

Lea Anne Batson

From: Lea Anne Batson
Sent: Wednesday, December 26, 2018 12:13 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: letter
Attachments: December 26 letter to Lea Anne.pdf; PA procedures.pdf

I have tried to reach you by phone and understand it is the holidays but wanted to give you a clearer picture of what has transpired in the last few weeks with Tedrick Knightshead. Lamont Cole has indicated that he is going to put an item on the agenda to remove me as Parish Attorney and is interested in appointing Tedrick Knightshead in my place. I understand that that is absolutely the Council's prerogative but wanted to make sure that you had all of the facts before you make a decision. I am about to forward a series of emails that document the circumstances surrounding Tedrick's departure.

The first attachment is the letter from Ashley expressing Lamont's intention. The second is the Council resolution adopted after Chandler's "investigation" of our office when Mary Roper was Parish Attorney. When she was removed in 2016 the major issues cited were that parish attorneys weren't working full time jobs for full time salaries, and they were handling cases that created conflicts (see article below). When I was interviewed, and subsequently appointed, I committed to eliminate the conflicts and strictly adhere to accountability with hours worked. Tedrick has refused to adhere to those policies so it was agreed that it would be better if he retired.

I also wanted to clarify the conflict issue. There is an old La. Supreme Court case that held that it was not a conflict for a city prosecutor to represent a criminal defendant. In that case an accused had knowingly hired a city prosecutor to defend him and, after he was convicted, argued that his conviction should be reversed due to the conflict. The Supreme Court held that it was not a conflict in that context and affirmed the conviction.

When Mary was Parish Attorney Tedrick was a city prosecutor. When I promoted him to first assistant, and doubled his salary to \$110,000 (\$25,000 more than I make), he supervised litigation of civil cases defending city police officers in wrongful arrest, excessive force, etc. That poses a different conflict which is why I insisted on the private practice limitation and when he was promoted, he agreed to it. The substantial salary increase was to compensate for the private practice income he would have to give up. Around the same time I discovered Greg Rome had also enrolled as counsel in a BRPD criminal case but when I confronted him, he acknowledged that it was a policy violation and withdrew.

That having been said, if the majority of the Council, after hearing all of the factors, does not view it as a conflict or a restriction they want imposed, I will honor that. I reiterate my concern that he concealed and lied about it rather than seek to change it but again, recognize that I serve at the pleasure of the council. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss any other concerns you have about my performance and this office. I have contacted Lamont to attempt to address his concerns but he has not returned my call. Thank you for your time. I hope you had a great Christmas and enjoy the rest of the holiday season.

https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/article_5ee9ed67-5746-557b-aa38-67e5b1d69046.html

Lea Anne Batson
 Parish Attorney