

January 29, 1988

Councilmember Albert Dick
Councilmember Jim Dybdahl
Councilmember Trudy Wolfe
Councilmember Keith Walker
Councilmember Neta Mills
Councilmember Tom Botts

Dear Councilmembers;

As you are all now aware, I have called a "special meeting" for Monday, February 1, 1988 regarding the Public Safety Department. I would, at this time like to share with you what has occurred over the past few weeks that has led to my decision to call this meeting.

- On January 8, 1988 I received a written letter of Grievance from Lisa D. Luse, wife of VPSO Luse, toward Public Safety Officer, Roger Purcell and Chief, Mayeda.

- On the following Monday, January 11, 1988 I made copies of the letter and placed copies in the boxes of all councilmembers, as well as our City Manager's box. Shortly after returning to my office at the association, I was called by Mike and told that because of the mention of sexual innuendos in the letter that he felt the councilmembers should not receive a copy of the letter, and he would be checking with the city attorney in regards to this. I also placed a call to the attorney, and was told that he had talked to Mike and that I should sit on the letter and not provide copies to anyone because of the mention of sexual innuendos and the fact that the officers were not here to defend themselves. I agreed to this, and therefore the council did not receive a copy of the letter.

- A couple of days later, I received a call from Lisa Luse asking me what was happening with her letter of grievance because her husband, Jeff Luse had been called in by Trooper Clemons and asked about the letter. I explained to Mrs. Luse what had occurred and what I was told by the city attorney. She explained that the mention of the sexual innuendos was just a small part of her complaint, and that she would be writing a letter to me asking that it be retracted from her statement, along with an apology.

- On January 14, 1988 I received the letter of retraction from Lisa Luse which also included an apology. (I am now providing a copy of that letter to you, along with the January 8, 1988 letter of grievance, of which I have blacked out those sentences previously made by Mrs. Luse regarding sexual behavior or innuendos.)

- On January 18, 1988 I received another letter from Lisa D. Luse regarding "inappropriate use of confidential information", as you all have also received.

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- On Monday, 1/25/88 I received a call from Lt. Purcell who was requesting that a meeting be set up with Keith Walker, Jim Dybdahl and myself because of something he was told regarding Councilmember Mills. He was very upset and mentioned that he wanted it all stopped or he would have to sue everyone. I told Mr. Purcell that I would contact everyone and get back to him as to the time of the meeting. I asked Gladys (who was the only one in the office besides Bob) to contact Mr. Walker and Mr. Dybdahl, as well as Mr. Dick who had sat on the Grievance Committee that handled a previous grievance submitted by Purcell against Councilmember Mills. Everyone was in town and left the time up to me, so I set the meeting for 4:00 p.m. that day. I asked that Councilmember Mills be contacted also, and be asked to attend this meeting since the complaint was about her. Mr. Purcell was then notified by Gladys of the time of the meeting.

- Shortly before noon, on that day, Mr. Purcell called me and stated that he would like to call the meeting off, because he had talked with his attorney and the attorney needed to go over everything with Roger. Mr. Purcell was very apologetic for calling me that morning and jumping the gun.

- At this point I was very concerned as to what was occurring and the measures that people seemed to be taking in order get their concerns and grievances resolved. I felt that the problem indeed needed resolving before it got totally out of control. I called the City Attorney regarding the Lisa D. Luse letter of grievance and talked to him about everything that had occurred along the way. Because Lisa Luse is a private citizen making a complaint it is not necessary for her or the council to follow the grievance procedure as it is in the personnel code. Mr. Ruddy told me that as the Mayor, I could call for a special meeting, going into executive session after calling to order and hear out the complaint. Before doing this however, I would need to contact Mr. Purcell and find out how soon he could get with his attorney before setting up the meeting. Mr. Ruddy said that he thought a week should be sufficient for Mr. Purcell to get with his attorney.

- I called Lt. Purcell at the station on Tuesday morning, 1/26/88 however he was not on duty so I left a message for him to call me. Chief Mayeda called me right back and asked if he could be of assistance. I explained to the Chief as to what I needed to talk to Purcell about and he informed me that he had worked a late shift and he would have Lt. Purcell call me back when he had gotten enough rest. Around ten that morning Mr. Purcell called me back and I explained what I needed to know from him before setting up a special meeting to address the problem, however Lt. Purcell could not give me a definite time because of his schedule and an officer being out of town for a doctor's appointment. He apologized for not having anything definite and said that he would try to get back to me as soon as the next day.

- Just before noon I received a call from Cathy Bolton who informed me that she had just received a call from Jeff Luse, who had received a call from Mary Katasse who was quite upset because she was told by Lt. Purcell that she had to write up a memo regarding anything VPSO Luse or Cathy Bolton had said to her about Lt. Purcell. I got very upset by this and called Mike and told him what I had heard and asked if the Lt. could do this. He said he would check into the matter. I called Mary at the station and Mike was on the other line so she had us put on a three-way call. The dispatcher was very upset and said that she did not want to be involved in any of this and that she was tired of seeing and hearing about the whole problem. She just wanted to do her job. She also said that she did not have a job description so she wasn't even sure that she was

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required to do this (write the memo). I explained to her that everyone was free to go with their feelings, and if she didn't want to be involved she certainly did not have to. Mike assured her that her job was not in jeopardy and asked her if she felt like she had learned a lot in her position even though there was no job description. And she said yes she felt she had learned a lot and she liked her job, but she didn't like what was going on with the way everyone was talking about each other. I questioned Mike as to who was lax in not making sure there was a job description for that position and he said he would look into it.

- We hung up with Mary and Mike called me back at my office with the association. I had stated to Mike before we hung up with Mary however that I wanted this whole problem resolved and I was setting that meeting for the next Thursday, 2/4/88. We talked about this after he called me back and I told him that I felt if we let this go on it was steadily going to get worse and I could not allow this to happen. Mike finally agreed with me and he said he would call Julie and have her set it up. I also told him that I wanted the city attorney to be present at the meeting. He questioned it and I explained to him that I felt we should have legal counsel there to guide us through the process.

- About 12:30 that same day I received a call from Mary Katsse who was a little bit calmer by then and she told me that she had wanted to call me to begin with but she, as well as the other employees had signed a memo stating that they would not talk to the Mayor or Council unless they had notified their "supervisor" first, and if they did they could receive disciplinary action or possible dismissal. This memo was to the employees of the department from Lt. Purcell and I had seen this before and totally disagreed with it. I have since been provided with a copy of it by the Chief and I also told him how I felt about it. I strongly believe that any employee has the right to talk to the Mayor or the Council, and we are capable of giving them guidance as to what they need to do as far as following the grievance procedure stated in the personnel code if it is a complaint that they have. When discussing this matter with the Chief and Mike, Mike explained it as just a way of enforcing what the personnel code says, but I still think it is wrong for the employees to feel that they cannot talk to any of us about anything. I told the city attorney of this memo and my feelings about it, and he wanted to know if Mike knew about it, and I explained to him what Mike's defence had been regarding the memo. Mr. Ruddy didn't appear to feel that this was right either.

- I have also had a past employee, Cathy Bolton come to see me about a grievance that she has, however at this date she has not submitted it in writing, and therefore I will not address this grievance until she does, if she does.

- A current employee of the department also called me and talked for a straight two hours regarding complaints that she has, however because she is an employee she will have to follow the chain of command and adhere to the grievance procedure as stated in the code. Unless the council wishes to suspend or waive the personnel code which was adopted by the council, and the city attorney feels that at this time we should hear out the private citizen complaint now and if need be hear out the employees later if the council wishes to suspend or waive the code.

I've tried to be as specific and clear about the events as they happened just to bring you all up to speed regarding the problem. I certainly do not have any intention of trying to do anything other than that, and I have been

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open minded about the entire situation and have heard everyone out in the same manner. It is not up to me to come to any conclusions regarding the matter, this is up to you the council. I have stated time and time again that no one has done anything wrong until it can be proven, and I feel that by hearing this out is the first step in resolving the problem one way or another.

The procedure that will be followed at the meeting will be:

1. The special meeting will be called to order, and upon stating the reason, will go into an executive session.
2. I will speak briefly to the grievance that is at hand, and explain the procedure to be followed.
 - a. The officers whom the grievance is about will be there to defend any allegations made in the grievance, one at a time.
 - b. The person submitting the grievance will be called in to speak to the complaint, and address one issue at a time.
 - c. If there is more than one private citizen who has submitted a grievance in writing, then they will be asked to come in one at a time to do so.
 - d. As per issue brought forth by the person complaining, the members of the council shall be allowed to ask questions of the private citizen or the officer whom the complaint is about.
 - e. Upon hearing out the complaint and the answers to the complaint, the council shall excuse all parties involved and do their best to come up with an end result in resolving and answering the complaint.

This is tentative, so please let me know if you feel there is a better or different way that the procedure should follow, and I will also be seeking guidance from the attorney regarding this procedure.

I do have a question also, regarding Councilmember Mills involvement in this hearing as a member of the council, as I do feel that her involvement in the complaint as mentioned by Mrs. Luse may put her in a conflict of interest situation. I will also ask the attorney about this.

Sincerely,



Liv C. Gray,
Mayor

Note: I forgot to mention that the reason the meeting is now Monday & not the Thursday that I had first requested was because the attorney couldn't make it out on that day...

CITY OF HOONAH