

Mayor Witt, City Council, Citizens of Lake City,

I am here tonight to request that the City Council ask the City Manager to reconsider my request for reinstatement.

I enjoyed working for the citizens of Lake City and interacting with the staff. My long-standing experience, education, and vision, coupled with my integrity and hard work, benefited all.

I am enrolled in the Doctor of Business Administration program, possess an MBA in HR Management and a Bachelor of Science in Human Services Management; I am a certified State of Florida Class B CDL State Tester and Trainer, and the owner of two businesses.

In the two months and five days (April 5 – June 10, 2021) as the Director of Human Resources for Lake City, I discovered certain policies and standard operating procedures the City did not have or needed to update.

These policies and procedures included Public Records Redaction, Social Media Use, Administrative Leave & Investigation, Performance Improvement, IT Security & Awareness, Compensation for Injury While on Duty (First Responders), and Procurement.

To enhance and improve these policies, I immediately began to research and compile data. When I found the City was vulnerable and policies needed revision, I brought this to City Manager Helfenberger's attention.

When it was brought to my attention that several first responders were not fully compensated for injuries while on duty, I made necessary connections to ensure the proper process began. These cases are still in the pipeline.

There were also approximately ten Workers' Comp. cases I had inherited that needed serious attention. These, too, were lacking notice.

Safety and Risk Management had never been implemented, another job I inherited.

I advised the City's Safety & Risk Officer to develop a curriculum for training for the City.

I presented the City Manager my findings, both in writing and verbally. The City Manager was in total agreement with my findings.

I also discovered, during a conversation with the City Manager, there were issues with his email.

He told me he hadn't used his email for three weeks because he "knew" information in his emails "was being leaked by someone within the City."

The City Manager instructed me to research IT security and Procurement and other current issues, including redacting public records.

It is the responsibility and duty of the Director of Human Resources to bring to the attention of the City Manager valid complaints, compliance, liability, inadequate security, and other issues which concern the staff and human resources within the City.

I believe how I was terminated was intentional. Mr. Helfenberger and the City of Lake City have damaged my professional relationships, and this will cause me economic harm in the future.

I have been humiliated in front of my peers, major city directors and suffered intentional infliction of emotional distress.

The City Manager's claim that I am "not a good fit" was not privileged information, not true, and will follow me wherever I go in the future and be an impediment to my career.

In the City's notice of termination, City Manager Helfenberger memorialized for all time that I am "not a good fit." The City's [Mr. Helfenberger's] statement is false and defamatory. It is not true. It lowers my reputation in the community and deters third persons from association with me.

I believe the City Manager retaliated against me because I revealed deficiencies with City practices and policies that are against the public's and the City's best interest.

I am happy to answer any of your questions and again ask you to encourage Mr. Helfenberger to reinstate me. I request this statement be placed in my personnel file in the City of Lake City's Human Resources Department.