

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT the Crook County Court met in a Special Session on May 19, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. in the meeting room located at 422 NW Beaver Street. In attendance were: County Judge Mike McCabe; County Commissioner Ken Fahlgren; County Commissioner Seth Crawford; County Counsel Jeff Wilson and County Court Secretary Colleen Ferguson.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

The media received notice of the meeting.

Judge McCabe called the meeting to order. The purpose of today's Special Session is to address a grievance filed by County Treasurer Kathy Gray regarding the conduct of Building Inspector Lou Haehnlen and alleged derogatory remarks he made toward both Ms. Gray and Assistant County Counsel Eric Blaine. The grievance was received by County Counsel on May 2nd or 3rd, and the review of the grievance process and the steps to be taken in completion of the process were begun.

The grievance process involves three steps: First, report the grievance to an immediate supervisor. Second, it then must move on to the Department Head and third the request goes on to the County Administration for a formal investigation and decision. The investigation will provide a recommendation to the County Court for a final decision on the grievance.

Mr. Wilson explained that there is nothing that says the process is available to an elected official. Mr. Wilson and HR Director Michelle Blomquist met to review the information, and agreed to treat this as a grievance. On May 7, 2014, Mr. Wilson sent a letter to Ms. Gray explaining the next steps in the procedure. The steps for the submission of the grievance to a Supervisor and Department Head in this case are the same. Grievance was forwarded to Bill Zelenka, Community Development Director. He interviewed staff and provided a written decision on May 13th. Mr. Wilson received and read the response letter and the letter was sent on to Ms. Gray on the 13th. Ms. Gray submitted a request that the matter go to the next step on May 14th. There is generally a ten-day response time to answer the request. That would be Saturday, the 24th. Mr. Wilson is requesting to extend the response date to May 30, 2014 due to the number of interviews that must be done and because there is no Human Resources Director available during this time due to Michelle Blomquist's recent resignation to take another position in the valley.

Mr. Wilson advised the Court of the directions needed today.

- 1) Appoint an individual to conduct a formal investigation. Usually the H.R. Director fills that position, but since there is no H.R. Director at this time, Mr. Wilson suggested that he be appointed to do the formal investigation.
- 2) Extend the ten-day time period for response from the 24th to the 30th May.
- 3) Grant the request of Ms. Gray to not name names of those interviewed. She wishes to not see any retaliation. Mr. Wilson explained the Whistle blowing law that allows for no retaliation.

Recommendations are:

Appoint Jeff Wilson to conduct formal investigation
Extend the response date to May 30th, 2014
Grant request to keep all interviews confidential

The Court and Counsel discussed past requests and unsigned grievances. Ms. Gray is clear that she is the individual filing the grievance and wants to protect those interviewed. Discussion was held on working environments when the interviewee's identities are not kept confidential, uncomfortable relationships,

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differences in confidential allegations and confidential interviews, and the difficulties of confidentiality in this process.

Motion

Commissioner Crawford moved to appoint County Counsel Jeff Wilson to conduct the formal investigation as recommended, extend the response date to May 30, 2014 and grant the request that all interviews names be kept confidential. Commissioner Fahlgren seconded the motion. The vote was 3-0, motion carried.

There being no additional items before the Court to be acted upon, Judge McCabe adjourned the Special Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Ferguson

Crook County Court Secretary