

CITY OF REIDSVILLE, GEORGIA
ETHICS COMMITTEE

On the matters that have come before the City of Reidsville's, Georgia, Ethics Committee dated by the petitioner, Assistant Chief Jermaine Snell, hereinafter referred to as the "Petitioner", against the respondent, Mayor Vicki Nail, hereinafter referred to as the "Respondent", as received and action taken starting on July 29, 2025 by the Ethics Committee hereinafter referred to as the "Committee" on all Complaints filed against the Respondent with a decision/recommendation on both Complaints to the Mayor and City Council through City Counsel dated this day as follows:

1. Issue:

The issue is: Whether the Respondent in her capacity as an elected official to the City of Reidsville, GA OR in a duly appointed position by the Mayor, who is actively serving the City of Reidsville, GA, violated an ethical duty as so alleged by the Petitioner.

2. Pertinent allegations, charter section(s), rule(s), ordinance(s) relating to the alleged ethical violation:

On July 29, 2025, the Ethics Committee received the Petitioner's Complaint against the Respondent dated July 16, 2025 and sealed to the City Clerk dated July 22, 2025.

The Petitioner alleges he was placed on administrative leave with pay for 14 days because he brought to the attention of the Respondent issues relating to the operation of the police department for the period from October 2024 to July 2025, regarding (not in any particular order) patrol officer's failure to wear protective vest, procedure concerning the police department's evidence locker, being ask to rescind a traffic violation, issues concerning the police department's missing items from the armory, issues with the actions from a subordinate officer climbing into a police department's window to access his office, issues about an resignation received by email over a weekend, and possible changing of time sheets. In the event, the Ethics Committee missed a particular issue, kindly bringing it to their attention.

On or about July 17, 2025, without notice to this Committee and invoiced to the City, the Respondent hired an independent investigator, Douglas Parker of Parker Consulting and Investigation for the purpose to conduct an investigation of possible policy violations pertaining to the Petitioner to which the Respondent was advised that Parker would "initiate the investigation by conducting interviews, review both city and PD policies, prepare a report based on the findings but would not make any recommendations."

On July 29, 2025, this Committee received a letter from the Respondent dated July 28,2025. On July 29,2025, the entire Committee discussed the contents of the letter directly with Respondent.

The Respondent requested approximately an extra week to reply to this Committee due to her illness. The Committee obliged the Respondent allowing her an extra week. The Committee, with notice to and no objection from either party, extended its' deadline for reporting to the parties and the City Counsel.

On August 12, 2025, this Committee received the Respondent's reply. And, read it on August 13, 2025.

On August 15, 2025, the Ethics Committee became aware of the Respondent's and Chief's hiring of Mr. Clark. An email was promptly sent to City Council requesting a copy of the report. Initially, the report came with no exhibits. A subsequent email had to be sent requesting the exhibits which were promised on August 25, 2025 and not received to date. The respondent denies in no way investigating this matter. See page 8, sixth paragraph. When the Committee reached out to Mr. Clark and his contract with the City states he was contracted and hired by the Respondent.

Coincidental to the Petitioner's complaint, he was placed on Administrative Leave for 14 days with pay for allegedly unprofessional conduct, overstepping his authority, and failure to produce evidence he stated he had when he was attempting to fire a subordinate officer and other actions mentioned in Respondent's reply, See Respondent's reply page 8, fourth paragraph.

About the same time, Chief Lynn filed a complaint with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI). They declined to investigate this matter. The Committee was not informed of the Chief's actions against the Petitioner. When this Committee became aware it promptly requested City Counsel send it all correspondence Chief Lynn sent GBI as well as, GBI's decision. The Committee only received the brief email GBI sent Chief Lynn denying to be involved with investigating the Petitioner.

Subsequently on or about the first part of August 2025, the Respondent placed the Petitioner on Administrative Leave for an additional 21 days without pay. When the City Council became aware of this action by the Respondent against the Petitioner, three of five council members voted to overturn the Respondent's decision from without pay to with pay. As of the writing of this report, the Committee understands the Petitioner remains on administrative leave with pay and would like to return to his position as Assistant Chief. Also, the Committee understands the Respondent wishes to have the Petitioner resign or be terminated. Now, the Respondent has filed three (3) recusal requests for the three city council members who voted to change Respondent's decision from without pay to with pay to this Committee as an ethical violation. And, Chief Lynn has filed two (2) recusal requests with this Committee claiming the individual council persons made an ethical violation. Also, the Petitioner has filed a Complaint against City Counselor with the Georgia Bar.

Throughout his time within the City of Reidsville Police Department, approximately five years, the Petitioner has received numerous promotions. The Respondent admits saying the Petitioner “would make a good chief at some point in the future and to use this time to learn from those with more experience.” See Respondent’s reply page 2, third paragraph. The Respondent too, states “He asked me would I send him to Chief School. I told him that I would, and I kept that promise.” See Respondent’s reply page 2, third paragraph.

Both the Respondent and the Chief are relatively new to their City of Reidsville positions.

It has come to the attention of this Committee that the Petitioner and the Respondent have hired independent legal counsel.

The Petitioner states that actions against him are an alleged ethical violation and any subsequent action to his complaint would be seen as retaliation. Per the City Charter, decision/recommendations from this Committee may only be appealed to Superior Court.

Post the Petitioner’s complaint, the Respondent hired the Investigator, attempted to involve GBI and filed three recusal requests for City Council members, particularly the ones that voted to overturn her as is allowed by the City Charter. The Respondent states that the Petitioner is speaking to members of the city council and illegal meetings were held on his behalf against her. See Respondent’s reply page 10, fourth paragraph.

The Petitioner appears to have sought help back in March 2025. See Evidence submitted to this Committee of email between Petitioner and Chief Lynn.

3. Discussion/analysis:

The Ethics Committee has met on numerous occasions to receive, read and discuss this complaint, responses, and reports.

This Committee refers to # 1 above. This Respondent is an elected official for the City of Reidsville. She falls under the purview of this Committee.

This Committee has considered the City Charter and City of Reidsville, Personnel Policy, as adopted into the City Charter.

The General Power and Authority of City Council are stated under City Charter Part I, Article II, Section 2.7.

The Respondent's duties are stated under City Charter Part I, Article II, Section 2.9. The Respondent is a "official head" for the City. See, Section 2.9(b). She operates for/on behalf of/in the interest of the city with the city council, The Respondent has no vote on City matters. She does not operate with blank autonomy. The mayor works in-tandem with the city council.

The Respondent needs to note the difference between a specially called meeting and the call for an executive session at a regular planning meeting or regular scheduled city council meeting. See City Charter Part I, Article II, Section 2-2.13. The City Council sought advice from Georgia Municipal Association.

Under the City Charter Part I, Article V, Section 3.10, governs the council's responsibility to city employees. As well as the mayor's duties as "chief executive officer" and responsible for employment of city personnel and for their discharge.

Under section(c) All city employees under the jurisdiction of the mayor and council shall be directly and immediately subject to the mayor. The discharge of any city employee by the mayor may be disapproved and overridden by the vote of three or more members of city council.

Under City Charter Part II, Chapter 1, Article VI, Section 2-162, neither the mayor nor any member of the City Council shall directly make use of or permit others to make use of for the purpose of furthering a private interest, city information not made available to the general public. It appears the Respondent used the Petitioner's personnel file for her defense to an ethics complaint or to ward off any complaint by the Petitioner.

Under City Charter Part II, Chapter 1, Article VI, Section 2-163(b) neither the mayor of [typo should be or] any member of the city council shall use his position in any way to coerce or give the appearance of coercing a city employee, an appointed official of the city or a contract employee to provide any benefit to him or to persons with his immediate family. This section appears to apply to the alleged allegations of the Respondent asking for a revocation of a traffic violation.

The hiring of an investigator is governed under City Charter Part II, Chapter 1, Article VI, Section 2-164 stating: Neither the mayor nor any member of the city council shall order any goods or services for the city or on behalf of the city without prior authorization from the mayor AND [emphasis added] council or its designee.

The Respondent cannot contract without the city council. Additionally, under Section 2.9 stated above specifically (d), the mayor's duties include signing all written contracts entered into by the *council* [emphasis added] on behalf of the city and all other contracts and instruments executed by the city which are by law required to be in writing. i.e Statue of Frauds. Petitioner was refused a copy of the investigation report by both the Respondent and City Counsel. The Petitioner, as indicated in the investigation report, contrary to the respondent's position, did cooperate with the investigation.

Significantly, under City Charter Part II, Article VI, Section 2-156(1-5), the public trust requires public servants to fulfill their duties faithfully and honestly and to subordinate any personal interest which conflicts with the public interest, A public servant is a trustee of the people and should strive to further the general welfare and not use public office in order to improve his own private standing. The principle policies which form the foundation of this article are:

- (1) The trust of citizens in their government is cultivated when individual public servants act with integrity and when the public is aware that its servants act with integrity.

(2) The constitutions, laws and regulations of the United States and State of Georgia and ordinances of the city should be upheld as a de minimis standard of conduct.

(3) The most effective way to eradicate unethical practices is to consistently act with the highest moral principles and to consistently react appropriately to the ethical decisions of others.

(4) Elected officials should exercise sound judgment and apply ethical principles in making decisions that in any manner reflect upon their elected office.

(5) All citizens should be treated with courtesy, impartiality and equality.

And, continued with Section 2-157, It is the intent of this article that the mayor or member of city council should not knowingly engage in any activity which is incompatible with the proper discharge of his official duties, or which would tend to impair his judgment or actions in the performance of his official duties. Furthermore, members of the mayor and council should avoid any action which might result in or create the appearance of using public office for private gain, impeding city efficiency, or economy or affecting adversely the confidence or public in the integrity of those who conduct the affairs and business of the city.

4. Decision/recommendation:

Therefore, this committee holds that the Respondent violated an ethical duty to the Petitioner. The Respondent's causes for placing the Petitioner on do not rise to the level of having the Petitioner being placed on administrative leave, being suggested to resign or otherwise questioning his service to the City of Reidsville.

The Respondent's actions against Petitioner and in her favor give the appearance of retaliation which in and of itself are an ethical violation.

Retaliation often involves punishing individuals without due process or a fair hearing, violating principles of fairness and justice that are fundamental to a healthy and ethical work environment. Too, there is a breach of transparency in an employee's fear of speaking up about concerns or misconduct. There is an erosion of trust within the organization and discourages transparency, hindering the ability to identify and address ethical breaches effectively. No employee should operate in an environment of fear for reporting wrongdoing or raising concerns. Retaliation can cause harm to both one's profession and person. An employee may miss out on promotions, or it can be the cause of stress and anxiety. Citing general principles of Retaliation.

Lastly, the Respondent and City Counsel have stated that this Committee “knows what it is doing” and “helped keep the City out of litigation.” Respectively. It is unfortunate that neither appears to have allowed this Committee to finish its investigation as allowed by City Charter before taking/seeking outside sources against the Petitioner. The Respondent was not forthright with information to this Committee. The Committee had to call GBI and Investigator Clark. To which, Investigator Clark referred the Committee back to the Respondent.

This Committee respectfully leaves the issue of recommendation(s) of any action to be taken against the Respondent to the elected City Council members.

Signed this 26th day of August 2025 by all members of the City of Reidsville's, Georgia, appointed and reappointed by the City Council and currently serving Ethics Committee.

Mordena Richardson 8/26/25
Mordena Richardson

Holly Sanborn Dyar 8/26/2025
Holly Sanborn Dyar

Greg Carr 8/26/2025
Greg Carr

This decision is not for publication, especially on any social media platform.

This decision is ONLY for the eyes of the Petitioner, Respondent, City Counsel, and

City Councilpersons. All information to and from the Ethics Committee is keep

confidential. None of the information relating to this Complaint shall be shared with

any persons no listed in the previous sentence above without a specific Court Order.