



Reappointment process for Urbana

Chad Hensch [REDACTED]
To: ! Bishop, Chaundra <cmbishop@urbanaininois.us>

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Greetings Mrs. Bishop,

As my Ward 5 representative, I'd like to share my experience with you into the Urbana reappointment process. I have no opinion—specific to the police situation. I can only share what Mayor Marlin personally did to me and to my service record to show her gratitude.

I served the City of Urbana for 24 years, 11 months and 8 days finishing my career as a Fire Division Chief (in the annually reappointed capacity) representing the cities interest of the labor contract, running incident command, shift supervision and overseeing programs assigned to me. I was forced as a "appointed" employee to adhere to a mandated residency requirement—for which I complied in 2011 by Chief Dilley. This requirement was dropped to permit other DC's to live outside the city—approximately 2-years later. I was reappointed for 9-consecutive years, under both (Prussing and Marlin) mayoral ships before being informed in February 2020 that I was not being reappointed on July 1st. Therefore, I was forced to retire. This was a totally unexpected supersize to me and my family. The reason stated was “culture change” by Mayor Marlin—was disclosed. I was not given a chance to speak to Mayor Marlin directly and was told her decision was final. All attempts by me to schedule a meeting were blocked. It was very clear to me following this meeting that the firefighter's union leadership in conjunction with Mayor Marlin had enacted a covert plan to ensure I would not be part of the Fire Department moving forward. If I did not adhere to this mandate that I would essentially be terminated by the city legal team. I was told not to contact my council member (Dennis Roberts) nor make any waves—simply ride out my tenure till June 30, 2020. Fire Chief Lauss told me in confidence (after this formal process) that his hands were tied, and he had nothing to do with it. Though I posses physical evidence to prove his knowledge otherwise.

Ironically, I wasn't the only fire department Division Chief to not be reappointed in 2020. Division Chief Derrick Odle also was not reappointed, and Fire Marshall Edwards was informed (October 2019) that he was not going to be reappointed and was given opportunity to extend his time beyond July 1, 2020, to reach his 25 th service anniversary on September 4, 2020. Phil had to sign a gag order to prevent his disclosure of his agreement until September 4, 2020. Division Chief Odle and I were not given same opportunity to extend our service time beyond July 1, 2020 in order to achieve our career milestones.

I did nothing wrong to support the actions for not being reappointed. I had no disciplinary files or complaints on my record. I have no disciplinary conversations with the chief on my conduct. This was a political action to appease the firefighter's union and offer a token reward for those whom would directly benefit as a result of this action—in my opinion. Mayor Marlin never visited the fire department on routine basis for daily operations to get an impression of the culture. She only made appearances for public promotion instances such as retirements or union promoted activities like fire factor or fire operations 101. Therefore, it is hard to fathom how she can see a desperate need for “culture change” internal for the betterment of the fire department—when she never experienced it firsthand to form the basis of her opinion. That is unless she was being fed misinformation—which I believe to be the case.

Only the fire chief (and all department heads) recommends to the mayor the intentions, desires, or willingness to retain the appointed members on his/her staff. This historically has been non-eventful as the mayor(s) simply put forth this list to retain them. The council votes yes or no for the upcoming year on the names submitted for reappointment. The mayor can only vote in a tie situation—procedurally. Thus, insight as to why this premediated effort was employed to remove personnel prior to their reappointment to avoid council scrutiny and vote debate or override.

Urbana has had a long history of recently removing appointed employees through a concealed scheme to thwart the attention of the public during the annual reappointment meeting. All these employees were not reappointed by Mayor Marlin.

John Collins—Operation Supervisor for Public Works. 2019—told he was not going to be reappointed and forced to leave or retire. He had over 20+ years' service.

John Schneider—Community Development Director. 2019 —told he was not going to be reappointed and forced to retire. He had over 20+ years' service.

Chad Hensch—Fire Department Division Chief. 2020—told was not going to be reappointed, forced to leave and retire. I had over 24+ years' service.

