

Investigation of engineer continues; city still mum

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An investigation into former city engineer Doug Green continues, but Upper Arlington city officials and police are not releasing details.

"I can't talk about any allegations that are ongoing," city manager Virginia Barney said. "We reached a severance agreement based on management concerns that had nothing to do with the allegations."

Barney said the issues regarding Green's management procedures surfaced in early April, at which time Green was placed on paid leave while an investigation began. Green had been with the city since 1990.

Upper Arlington police are investigating undisclosed allegations against Green.

"At this time, all we're commenting on is there an investigation by the police department, but we can't comment any further," said Lt. Ernie Ankrom. "It's still pending."

The Ohio Ethics Commission is also involved in the investigation.

"They are working with our police, which is standard procedure when we have an issue brought forward," Barney said. "Because we are a public entity and we feel so strongly about holding the public trust, this is our standard policy. We let (the ethics commission) know that our police are investigating and let the state auditor know as well."

According to a separation agreement between the city and Green, his resignation became effective May 22. At the time of his resignation, Green's salary was \$79,000.

Green is receiving a nine-week severance package at the rate of \$38.8050 per hour, his pay rate prior to his resignation, to be made in biweekly installments. The city will continue his family health and life insurance through June, with his employee's share deducted from his paychecks.

During the nine-week severance period, the city will also continue to pay 10 percent of Green's salary for contribution to the Ohio Public Employees Retirement System. The separation agreement also states that the city will provide Green with "a standard letter of reference which contains dates of employment and the duties for which Green was responsible. The duties, at Green's option, can be listed in detail."

The separation agreement goes on to state that the city will provide information that Green "voluntarily resigned at the request of the city" upon being asked by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services or any other state agency handling unemployment compensation.

In exchange for these provisions, the agreement states, Green releases the city from any future legal claims.

Green's attorney, Jeffrey M. Poth, declined comment.

Barney notified council president Don Leach and vice president Mary Ann Krauss when the investigation concerning

Green first began, while the rest of council found out at the end of May after Green's resignation became effective.

Council member Wade Steen said that while the city engineer reports to the city manager, the position's stature warrants that all of council be notified about employment issues.

"The city engineer comes before council with recommendations to go with this firm or that firm to do major, multi-million-dollar projects," Steen said. "When somebody like that tenders his resignation, that's the kind of person we should know about."

Council member Frank Ciotola said he's still trying to find out the details of the allegations against Green and what the investigation entails.

"If it turns out to be a somewhat routine personnel issue that Ginny deals with on a regular basis, it's not a big problem. It's not my job to micro-manage her," Ciotola said. "But if it's somewhat of a serious nature if it's misappropriation of funds or any ethics issues and that's what comes out of this and there's an indication that she knew a lot of what was being investigated, then I do have a concern with not being notified or kept in the loop."

Leach said he trusts Barney's judgment in handling personnel matters that fall under her purview.

"It was a matter of letting the city manager do her job," he said. "She has taken action now and council is up to speed. And council will be kept up to speed as the investigation goes forward."

Barney said she has had a conversation with council members about their expectations for communication on such issues.

"I'm always happy to talk with any council members when they have questions or concerns. Council leadership was notified when the issues first came to light," Barney said. "It was not a matter of not telling (the rest of council), it was a question of when was the appropriate time. Thankfully, we don't have these issues come up very often."

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