



Special Publication

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

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MJ settles lawsuit, begins investigation into more allegations

Mayor lashes out at outgoing city manager

By LAURIE EVERETT
Mt. Juliet News Managing Editor

The Mayor of Mt. Juliet called for investigation into fresh allegations against city Public Works Director Hatton Wright, Monday night.

The call for action came after the city commission unanimously accepted an out of court settlement of a federal lawsuit filed against the director and the city by a former city employee alleging gender discrimination and the creation of a hostile work environment.

The suit was filed nearly a year ago by Sandy Dempsey, Wright's former administrative assistant after her allegations were deemed "unfounded" in an internal city investigation. Dempsey resigned after she was demoted to a position that included cleaning toilets in the job description.

"The settlement reinstates Dempsey as records clerk in the police department and

awards her \$45,000 in back pay and benefits," Dempsey's attorney Tracey Robinson-Coffee said in a telephone interview Monday.

The settlement also carries with it a non-disparity clause, Coffee said.

Elam Monday night lashed out at city manager Rob Shearer, noting that now there are new allegations against Wright by another "public works employee." A city official confirmed the complaint was filed by storm water clerk Kathy Reitz. Two weeks ago, the city commission voted 4-1 to accept Shearer's resignation.

"This is a serious matter with the commission," Elam said Monday night, referring to the settlement.

She said there have been more allegations against Wright which she believed Shearer "has ignored." Elam noted she had no "faith" in Shearer's "willingness" to rectify the issue and she asked the commission to appoint the city attorney to commence an investigation.

"If there is a problem it will be fixed," she said to city employees in her lengthy statement.

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