

OVERLAND PARK

K A N S A S

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December 22, 2020

Mindy Manes
[REDACTED]
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Ms. Manes:

Thank you for your letter dated December 15, 2020 related to my comments during the August 21, 2020 press conference. I'm sorry I have not responded earlier however, I had knee surgery and have been recovering. I wish to address the comments that you have referred to as "miscommunications" as I believe they have been misconstrued.

In our form of government, the City Manager is in charge of employee matters. We trust Mr. Bill Ebel to make those decisions. I stated very clearly in that press conference that the City acknowledged it did not have cause to terminate Officer Clayton Jenison's employment.

I feel confident in saying that based on my interactions with Mr. Ebel, and previous City Managers on unrelated and separate personnel matters, it is not the practice of this City to terminate employees without cause. Had the City elected to do so in the case of Officer Jenison, it would have been completely within the Civil Service Commission's authority to overturn that termination.

In making those statements, I was presuming you would "follow the strict guidelines from your by-laws" and follow the guidance of your attorney. I was further presuming that the Commission would be acting with "integrity". With all due respect, I think logic dictates that if we believe we do not have cause to terminate an employee and we do so, there is a high likelihood that decision will be overturned by either the Commission or by a court.

I do not agree that "[a] more accurate comment" would have been "that the [C]ity was concerned that the Civil Service Commission's hands might be tied by the [C]ity having inadequate policies to address incidents such as the officer shooting of John Albers" as that is not true. I do believe there were, and are, adequate policies in place to investigate policy violations, and the Police Department internal investigation determined that Officer Jenison did not violate any policy.

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While this admittedly is a tragic event, I will repeat, the City did not have cause to terminate Officer Jenison. The City Manager, acting on behalf of the City, and Officer Jenison determined it was in the best interest of all involved to part ways. I believe it is time to move forward as a community and I believe both parties understood and acknowledged it would be much more difficult to do so if Officer Jenison was still a member of the Overland Park Police Department.

I am saddened that you have interpreted my statements as an indictment of the Civil Service Commission; that was certainly not my intent. I appreciate the opportunity to clarify the matter.

As you point out, the City has a long history of encouraging citizen engagement with our Police Department and we will continue to do so.

Lastly, I am grateful for your years of service as a part of that engagement. Therefore, I hope in the future you will feel reach out and call me personally if you have a question about something I have said.

Respectfully,



Carl Gerlach
Mayor