



CITY OF West Linn

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Interim City Manager John Williams

jwilliams@westlinnoregon.gov

(503) 742-6063

West Linn Police Chief Placed on Administrative Leave During Independent Investigation

WEST LINN, OR – April 8, 2020

On Wednesday, April 1 the West Linn City Council voted 5-0 to conduct an independent investigation into the City's handling of Michael Fesser's tort claim against the City from the date it was received through the date a settlement was reached with the City's insurance carrier. This work will be performed by an outside investigator with no connection to the City of West Linn or its staff. The scope will include how the City Council, City Manager, City Attorney, and other staff received information on this matter, as well as how the Police Department responded to the claim. The scope is not intended to overlap with investigations currently underway by the Department of Justice and local District Attorneys into potential criminal or civil rights charges in the Fesser case.

In order to further ensure a complete, fair, and impartial investigation, Interim City Manager John Williams has placed Police Chief Terry Kruger on paid administrative leave for the duration of the investigation. Administrative leave ensures that all parties have the opportunity to clearly and completely answer questions and explain their actions. It is not a determination of wrongdoing on the part of Chief Kruger or anyone else. Any such determination can only be made after the investigation is complete.

The City expects to retain an investigative firm or individual as quickly as possible after reviewing potential candidates with the City Council. The timeframe for the investigation has not been defined, but it will be completed as rapidly as possible considering the challenges related to doing this work during the COVID-19 crisis.

This investigation is just one part of the work underway at the City of West Linn, which is committed to a full, impartial and transparent assessment of all these matters in order to continue to rebuild community trust and ensure the highest possible level of service moving forward. Other work underway includes conducting a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion audit; developing and implementing a City-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan; and discussing creation of a Task Force to advise the City Council and staff on these issues.

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