



City Manager's Office

Inter-Office Correspondence

Date: May 20, 2019
To: Joel Fitzgerald, Police Chief
From: Jay Chapa, Assistant City Manager
Subject: Termination of Employment

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Because of your increasing lack of good judgment as the Police Chief of the City of Fort Worth, we have lost confidence that you can be a trusted member of the City's Management team. You have a track record of making decisions that are more focused on your best interest instead of the best interest of the city, the organization or department as a whole.

Most recently, you chose to address a personal matter at a national event where the focus should have been on our fallen officers and the officers being honored for their heroism. While you perceive that you did not act in an inappropriate manner, your conduct escalated, rather than deescalated, the conflict between you and the state police union. Your decision to address the issue at that time and in that venue provided the opportunity for those with whom you are in conflict to legitimately raise concerns and criticize your actions. This incident distracted from the week-long events that should have been the only focus of the trip.

Similarly, on multiple occasions your inability to build relationships with other department directors and employees has been a topic of our conversations and evaluations. Your interactions have caused concerns about your ability to compromise for the benefit of a corporate decision which did not align with your preference in the situation.

Your failure to coordinate an effort with all involved to address the concerns raised by the CJIS auditor also created more problems and added unnecessary stress and drama. As we found, the issue was ultimately resolved when all team members were brought together to improve communication and focus on the solution. Your decision to react to the situation by making allegations and providing a narrative that attempted to remove any potential responsibility on you or your department is not how a leader should implement problem solving strategies in a team situation.

Your decision to conduct a prerecorded media interview in an attempt to improve your image – apparently without notifying your supervisors or anyone outside the Police department – is another example of your failure to consider how your actions impact the broader organization. Not only was the interview a surprise to your superiors, you commented on matters involving issues that are currently being litigated by the City around decisions you made. It never occurred to you that your interview would lead to additional media inquiries to our elected officials, management and others.

Expectations for a person in the Police Chief position in this organization is to have the ability to build a rapport with not only members of the community but also with other management team members who are critical in the success of the Police Department and the city. Additionally, the energy this organization has had to exert to deal with issues that required responses or reactions from decisions you have made and actions you have taken have created negative distractions. These decisions and actions include your introduction of the 48 Rules of Power as a leadership primer to your employees, publicly accepting a position with another city without considering how that news would impact your organization and the community, and writing memos to yourself alleging discrimination or unfairness then refusing to move forward with investigations to address your allegations.

Additional examples of your inability to effectively lead the Police Department include failing to manage the Police Department budget and going well over the authorized budget in multiple years.

For these reasons, your employment with the City of Fort Worth is terminated, effective immediately. Because your employment is involuntarily terminated for cause, you are not entitled to a severance payment or payment of your earned compensatory time. Your accrued vacation, sick leave, and holiday leave will be paid in accordance with current City policy.

- c. David Cooke, City Manager
Brian Dickerson, Human Resources Director