



CITY OF EVERETT Fire Department

2019 FIRE DEPARTMENT FRAUD INVESTIGATION

Executive Summary for Council

January 14, 2021

Councilmembers,

In August 2019 the new Fire Marshal reported discovery of discrepancies between an attendance calendar used to plan inspections and the payroll attendance records for one of the inspectors assigned to his division. The inspection calendar showed more absences than the payroll record, suggesting the employee time banks were not being charged accurately. The issue was immediately reported to human resources and the fire department was asked to do fact-finding and a departmental investigation.

The result of the departmental investigation suggested troubling findings, including the possibility of hundreds of hours of time off unrecorded in payroll and 62 additional hours where no evidence of his attendance could be found. Everett Police and the Snohomish County Prosecutors Office were notified, and a professional investigation was contracted.

The result of the combined investigations sustained the finding that hours off were unaccounted for, and that additional absences existed without explanation. The department had recommended termination of the employee and that was in process when the employee, via union representation chose to repay the unaccounted-for hours and retire from employment. While this outcome is less satisfying than termination, it was agreed to be the best course by city administration and eliminated the potential for a legal battle over wrongful termination.

While this finding certainly tarnishes the department and damages public trust, the discrepancy was discovered due to a wholesale change in fire department administration and our accountability systems. The fraud itself is a disgrace, but the processes put in place that allowed its discovery and successful conclusion with no objection from the employee or IAFF is representative of the culture change we are still working on continuously at Everett Fire.

Attached is the summary of findings placed in front of the employee upon conclusion of the investigation. If you have any questions or wish to receive a copy of the full investigative report, please ask.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave DeMarco'.

Dave DeMarco

Fire Chief