

Treasure Coast Newspapers

TCPALM

St. Lucie News-Tribune

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AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF ST. LUCIE

Before the undersigned authority personally appeared, Natalie Zollar, who on oath says that she is Classified Inside Sales Manager of the St. Lucie News-Tribune, a daily newspaper published at Fort Pierce in St. Lucie County, Florida: that the attached copy of advertisement was published in the St. Lucie News-Tribune in the following issues below. Affiant further says that the said St Lucie News-Tribune is a newspaper published in Fort Pierce, in said St. Lucie County, Florida, and that said newspaper has heretofore been continuously published in said St. Lucie County, Florida, daily and distributed in St. Lucie County, Florida, for a period of one year next preceding the first publication of the attached copy of advertisement; and affiant further says that she has neither paid or promised any person, firm or corporation any discount, rebate, commission or refund for the purpose of securing this advertisement for publication in the said newspaper. The St. Lucie News-Tribune has been entered as Periodical Matter at the Post Offices in Fort Pierce, St. Lucie County, Florida and has been for a period of one year next preceding the first publication of the attached copy of advertisement.

Customer	Ad Number	Copyline	PO #
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Pub Dates
February 23, 2018
March 2, 2018

Sworn to and subscribed before me this day of, March 02, 2018, by

Natalie Zollar, who is
Natalie Zollar
 personally known to me or
 who has produced _____ as identification.

Karol E Kangas
Karol Kangas Notary Public



Port St. Lucie attorney out, but who's to blame?

George Andreassi
Treasure Coast Newspapers
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

PORT ST. LUCIE — Mayor Greg Oravec made Reggie Osenton his top pick for city attorney, negotiated Osenton's contract and provided regular feedback on Osenton's performance, including a strongly worded annual review.

But Oravec deflected any blame for himself or other City Council members while overseeing Osenton, who was pressured to resign suddenly Feb. 22 in the wake of an internal investigation which found he violated city hiring policy and presided over a dysfunctional staff.

It was the third time in four years a city attorney has left under a cloud and the second time during Oravec's three-year tenure as mayor. Under the city charter, the council appoints the city attorney, who serves at the council's pleasure.

Blame Osenton

Oravec placed all the blame for the recent breakdown in the City Attorney's Office squarely on Osenton.

"The City Council does not engage in the day-to-day management of the city attorney or any employees," Oravec wrote in an email response to TCPalm's questions about who was at fault. "The city attorney is responsible for managing the City Attorney's Office and all its employees."

"What we can and will continue to do is learn from our experience, get better as a result and do everything we can to move our community forward," Oravec wrote.

But Oravec did not say what went wrong, what lessons council members learned from the debacle, what they could have done differently or what steps they would take to better oversee the City Attorney's Office in the future.

Council members communicated regularly with Osenton during his 17 months as city attorney.

Four council members gave Osenton passing grades on his annual review in November, while Oravec's evaluation called Osenton's customer service and performance at council meetings poor.

Investigation findings

The city's internal investigation of the City Attorney's Office found Osenton violated hiring policy by listing the word "attractive" among the 10 qualities he was seeking in staff-attorney candidates. The investigation also revealed a staff generally divided between veteran female employees and new male employees hired by Osenton.

Osenton took responsibility for his policy violation, telling TCPalm it was "my mistake."

He said he first developed the list of 10 qualities many years ago while he was in private practice and never updated it.

"As far as the word 'attractive' on that form, it was stupid of me to use the form that had that word on it," Osenton said. "If I had just read it at first blush, and I didn't know the whole story, it would knock my hat off."

"But knowing the whole story and knowing what's in my character and in my heart, I know that's not what it was about," Osenton said. "I can tell you with 100 percent certainty, attractiveness had nothing to do with any of the hires. There's not a sexist bone in my body."

Osenton declined to discuss the investigation's findings related to the gender divisions in his staff.

"I don't care to rebut them. I just want to move on," Osenton said.

Osenton said City Manager Russ Blackburn let him know the council wanted him gone.

"Council asked me to resign," Osenton said. "The contact went through the city manager, who was asking on behalf of the City Council. I don't really want to go into the specific conversations I had with anybody."

Blackburn, however, disputed that assertion: "No one asked for Mr. Osenton's resignation."

Osenton said he was looking for a new job, but declined to disclose his prospects.

Unreported problems

Vice Mayor Shannon Martin — who with Oravec is a holdover from the council that hired Osenton in July 2016 — also blamed Osenton for allowing staff relations in the City Attorney's Office to deteriorate.

"I think it's unfortunate that there was

so much mismanagement going on," Martin said. "It was up to Reggie, really, as the leader of that department to notify the council, his bosses, of things going on. And obviously, he didn't do that for his own reasons."

"Maybe he thought he could handle it. Maybe he thought he was handling it. I don't know," Martin said. "I really can't answer as to why he didn't deal with it."

Councilman John Carvelli also said the problems in the City Attorney's Office were not apparent to him.

"I don't know how it happened on our watch, but when we found out there was a complaint, action was taken," Carvelli said. "We rely on people to run the departments on day-to-day operations."

Councilwomen Jolien Caraballo and Stephanie Morgan did not respond to questions about the council's accountability for Osenton's failings and the deterioration of staff relations in the City Attorney's Office.

It was Oravec who triggered the first downward spiral of the City Attorney's Office in February 2014, when he blew the whistle on suspected Sunshine Law violations by three City Council members.

Longtime City Attorney Roger Orr resigned in April 2014 after a State Attorney's Office investigation found he acted as an intermediary in private council talks about whether to offer Oravec a severance package to resign as city manager.

That June, the council promoted longtime Assistant City Attorney Pam Booker to the city attorney job.

Oravec was elected mayor in November 2014 and Martin won a second four-year term.

Predecessor fired

The Oravec-led council fired Booker in February 2016 for poor communications and for providing bad legal advice.

The council hired a Palm Beach Gardens law firm as acting city attorneys until the new city attorney took office. That was Osenton on Sept. 1, 2016.

In the wake of Osenton's ouster last week, the City Council named Jim Stokes interim city attorney. He took the oath of office Monday, becoming Port St. Lucie's fourth city attorney in four years.

The council wants to find a permanent city attorney, its fifth in five years, by the time Stokes' one-year contract is up.

City Attorney's Office timeline

Feb. 8, 2014: Greg Oravec resigns as city manager amid conflicts with Mayor JoAnn Faiella and Councilman Ron Bowen

Feb. 14, 2014: Oravec reports suspected City Council Sunshine Law violations to State Attorney's Office

April 14, 2014: Longtime City Attorney Roger Orr announces his retirement after being implicated as intermediary between two council members in Sunshine violations

June 2014: City Council promotes Assistant City Attorney Pam Booker to city attorney

Nov. 4, 2014: Oravec elected mayor, Shannon Martin re-elected to the council.

February 2016: City Council fires Booker

July 11, 2016: Council selects Osenton as top city-attorney candidate

Sept. 1, 2016: Osenton assumes command of City Attorney's Office.

Nov. 8, 2016: John Carvelli, Jolien Caraballo and Stephanie Morgan elected to the council.

Nov. 20, 2017: Council gives Osenton mixed reviews, with Oravec providing the most critical comments, and a 5 percent raise in annual performance evaluation.

Jan. 22: Paralegal Jennyfer Ladouceur lodges complaint with Human Resources Department alleging favoritism towards paralegal Charles Snyderman and poor treatment of Office Manager Betty Bollinger by men in the office.

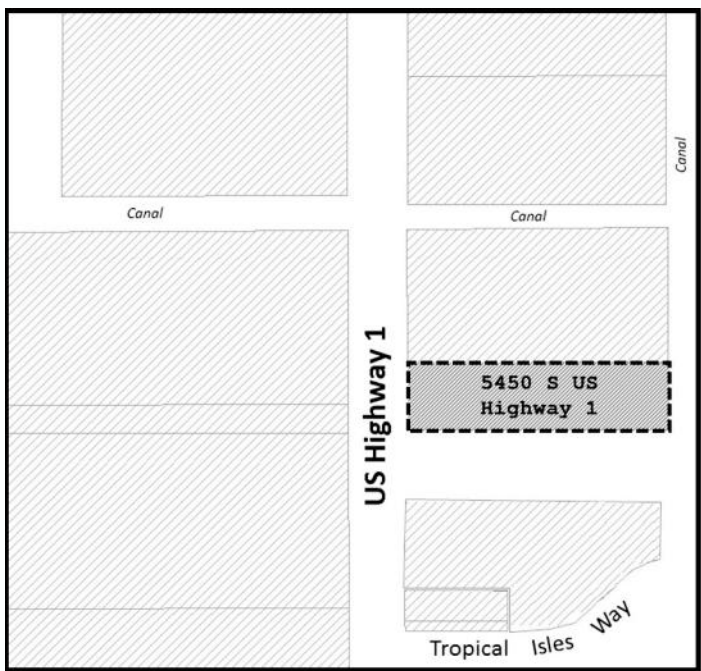
Feb. 20: Human Resources investigation finds Osenton violated city hiring policy and oversaw the deterioration of staff relations; Osenton submits proposed severance agreement.

Feb. 22: City Council accepts Osenton's resignation, approves severance agreement and hires James Stokes as interim city attorney for one year.

CITY OF FORT PIERCE NOTICE OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE

The City Commission of the City of Fort Pierce, Florida, pursuant to Chapter 171 of Florida State Statutes, of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Fort Pierce, will on Monday, March 5th, 2018, and Monday, March 19th, 2018 hold Public Hearings on the enactment of the following proposed ordinance on first and second readings, respectively, in the City Hall Commission Chambers, 100 North U.S. #1, Fort Pierce, Florida, at their meeting which begins at 6:30 p.m.; said ordinance entitled:

ORDINANCE NO. 18-006 - AN ORDINANCE EXTENDING THE TERRITORIAL LIMITS OF THE CITY OF FORT PIERCE, FLORIDA, TO INCLUDE PROPERTY LOCATED AT 5450 SOUTH US HIGHWAY 1, SHOWN ON EXHIBIT A; DIRECTING THE ST. LUCIE COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER TO ASSESS SAID PROPERTY AND PLACE IT ON THE CITY TAX ROLLS AS OF JANUARY 1, 2018; DIRECTING THE ST. LUCIE COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR TO COLLECT TAXES ON THE HEREIN DESCRIBED PROPERTY; ESTABLISHING THE ZONING DESIGNATION; ESTABLISHING THE LAND USE DESIGNATION; DIRECTING FILING OF THE ORDINANCE WITH THE CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT AND CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY; DIRECTING REVISION OF THE CHARTER BOUNDARY ARTICLE TO BE FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND SUBMITTED TO THE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH; PROVIDING FOR A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS THEREOF IN CONFLICT HERewith; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.



All interested parties may appear at the Public Hearings and be heard with respect to the proposed ordinance. Said proposed ordinance, complete legal description of the subject site, by metes and bounds, and application will be available for inspection in the City Clerk's Office, City Hall, 100 North U.S. #1, Fort Pierce, Florida.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, the City hereby advises you that if you or another person decide to appeal any decision made by the City Commission with respect to any matter considered at its meeting or hearing, that you or said person will need a record of the proceedings, and that for such purpose, affected persons may need to insure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 286.26, Florida Statutes, persons with disabilities needing special accommodation to participate in this meeting should contact the City Clerk's Office at (772) 467-3065 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

/s/ Linda W. Cox
City Clerk
February 23, 2018
March 2, 2018

TCN-1926642

KEEP PORT ST. LUCIE BEAUTIFUL

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day

SATURDAY, MARCH 10
8AM-12PM

450 SW THORNHILL DRIVE

Ammunition
Automotive fluids
Batteries (non-household)
Bug sprays
Computers/Electronics
Drain cleaners
Fluorescent light bulbs/tubes
Fuels
Herbicides
Insecticides
Lighter fluid
Mercury thermometers
Oil-based paint
Propane tanks (20 lbs. or less)
Rx drugs
Solvents/Thinners
Thermostats

For more information about Keep Port St. Lucie Beautiful
www.cityofpsl.com/kpslb | kpslb@cityofpsl.com | (772) 873-6312
St. Lucie County Solid Waste accepts most household hazardous waste free of charge year-round.