



the John Scott Dailey
**FLORIDA
INSTITUTE OF
GOVERNMENT**
at Florida State University

March 16, 2017

The City of Lake City
Attn.: Audrey E. Sikes, City Clerk
City Clerk's Office
205 North Marion Ave
Lake City, FL 32055

Dear Ms. Sikes:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a written complaint about unprofessional and inappropriate behavior by Wendell Johnson, City Manager of the City of Lake City, including an incident last week in which I was injured by Mr. Johnson. A summary of Mr. Johnson's behavior, including some background information, is provided.

I am employed by Florida State University as a Research Analyst in the Institute of Government. In that role and in my previous positions, including in the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade & Economic Development (OTTED), I have known and worked with Mr. Johnson for several years in his current role as the City Manager of the City of Lake City and previously as the City Manager of Clewiston. We did not have an adversarial relationship; in fact, quite the contrary, as we have previously worked well together.

Starting in August 2016, I have been assisting in discussions about infrastructure improvements at HAECO Americas at the Lake City Gateway Airport (which is owned by the City of Lake City). HAECO is a maintenance, repair and overhaul facility which announced a 400-job expansion in July 2016. To develop a strategy for making the necessary improvements, Mr. Johnson, stakeholders, others and I have been participating in numerous conversations and meetings in recent months. In my opinion, as Mr. Johnson has increasingly been in opposition to what stakeholders were recommending and in favor of bonding, his behavior towards me and others has become unprofessional, inappropriate and violent. Some examples follow:

- Mr. Johnson walked into a meeting and called me "Hillbilly Girl." I simply ignored him.
- During a meeting with Glenn Hunter (Director for the Columbia County Economic Development Department), City Councilman George Ward (who is the designated Councilman to oversee the airport) and me, Mr. Johnson burst in shaking, stuttering and red-faced, and asked the Councilman to step outside so he could have a conversation with us. The Councilman refused. Mr. Johnson then began yelling and screaming at Mr. Hunter and me, accusing us of going over his head and speaking with his boss and blaming him for things being a mess. This went on for at least 10-15 minutes until Councilman Ward suggested to Mr. Johnson that they go back to Mr. Johnson's office.

- On February 1, 2017, Jeff Hendry (my colleague from the Institute of Government) and I were scheduled for a tour of Klausner Lumber, then lunch and then a tour of HAECO's MRO facility. At the last minute, I was asked to attend another meeting regarding a grant, so Mr. Hendry asked me to forego the last portion of the Klausner tour in order to get to that meeting. When I arrived in the conference room at City Hall, Mr. Johnson made chit chat until the Assistant City Manager and the Airport Manager came into the room. Mr. Johnson then told me he had held out an olive branch to Mr. Hunter regarding his tirade and he hoped I would forgive him. He was very solicitous and seemed sincere, so I said yes I forgave him. Once others arrived and the meeting began, Mr. Johnson presented his idea about bonds as an alternative to a grant and kept asking my opinion. Ten minutes into the meeting, it felt like he was trying to bully me into saying something he could attack. I repeatedly told him I could not speak on behalf of the company or the county. He kept trying to convince the others and me that this was the best option and he kept pushing me to say something. When I repeated that I could not speak on behalf of the company or county, he finally stated, "I've known you a long time and I can tell you have something on your mind!" I did not respond. Then he referred to himself and I as "old dogs" and I told him, "Speak for yourself"!
- On February 2, 2017, there was a stakeholders meeting at the airport. The discussion revolved around Mr. Johnson's bonding idea and getting the county to participate. HAECO's vice president told Mr. Johnson he could not take such an idea back to corporate and sell it. When the meeting broke up, Mr. Hunter invited me to attend a Rotary meeting where HAECO's vice president had been asked to give a presentation. Once there, Mr. Johnson came over to me and started saying, "Diane, I know there's something you are not telling me! You need to go ahead and tell me what it is!" He continued in this vein without me responding. I finally said, "I'm fine" in hopes of it ending the conversation. He then said, "Well, shake my hand then, but I know somethings wrong." I shook his hand.
- On March 8, 2017, Mr. Hendry and I attended a HAECO Transportation & Training Issues meeting at Mr. Hunter's office. Before the meeting began, Mr. Johnson was shaking hands with people in the room. He approached me and reached his hand out to me. I held my hand out to shake, but instead of shaking my hand, he grasped my right hand and twisted it as hard as he could. He then quickly moved on. I was in pain, speechless and stunned by his action. It was time to take our seats so there was no opportunity for me to tell anyone what had happened. I sat there with my hand swelling, tingling, turning cold then numb. Later, after the meeting ended, I told Councilman Ward about Mr. Johnson calling me names, yelling and screaming at me and injuring my hand. I told Councilman Ward that I intended on filing a complaint and he replied, "You should file a complaint". I walked away to say good bye to other attendees. Mr. Johnson began shaking people's hands. When he got to me and held his hand out, I told him I was not shaking his hand because he had hurt my hand earlier. I wasn't shouting, but I spoke loud enough that others nearby heard me. I then walked away.
- As a result of Mr. Johnson's violent abuse to my hand, my fingers and wrist remained swollen through the night of March 8, so I went to the Calhoun-Liberty Hospital Emergency Room early morning March 9 where 5 x-rays were taken. The initial diagnosis was a sprained wrist which was treated by wearing a cocked-wrist brace. I was told if there was not significant improvement within the next 48 hours I should see my family physician. Per FSU Policy, Jeff Hendry notified FSU's Department of Environmental Health & Safety regarding a Workers' Comp incident report

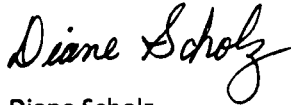
and the FSU General Counsel to find out if some action should be taken. When I arrived at the Institute of Government office after the ER diagnosis, I completed an Incident Report regarding the injury inflicted upon me by Mr. Johnson for Workers' Compensation purposes.

- On March 14th, I went to see my family physician because issues with hand continued. My family physician stated that it was more than a sprained wrist and that there is trauma to all of the fingers, the wrist and to a tendon stretching up my forearm. He stated that there may be nerve damage which might require a plastic surgeon to correct, but I needed to give the hand a few weeks before a decision could be made.

I'm not sending this letter because I seek compensation, but because I believe the City Council needs to be aware of the conduct of its City Manager. Because of Mr. Johnson's violent behavior, I am requesting the City Council issue an official reprimand against Mr. Johnson, to place it on the next available city council agenda for reading at the meeting and for the reprimand to go into Mr. Johnson's personnel file.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at dscholz@fsu.edu.

Sincerely yours,



Diane Scholz

Cc: Councilman George Ward
Jeff Hendry, Executive Director
Institute of Government at Florida State University