

From: [Bostdorff, Kate](#)
To: [Davis, Wayne](#); [Vogelgesang, Mariah](#)
Subject: Final version - James Myers DDN article
Date: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 7:52:00 AM
Attachments: [James Myers DDN final.docx](#)
[image011.png](#)
[image012.png](#)
[image013.png](#)
[image014.png](#)
[image015.png](#)

Here is the latest version.



Kate Bostdorff

Communications Director | City of Centerville
100 West Spring Valley Road | Centerville, Ohio 45458
937.428.4765 | City Hall: 937.433.7151 | centervilleohio.gov



Dayton Daily News

Suggested headline: Centerville Sgt. Fired for Insubordination, Dishonesty

The City of Centerville is sharing more details about the firing of a veteran police sergeant. James Myers' employment was terminated on March 16 for eight violations involving the Centerville Police Department's rules of conduct and five violations of the city's personnel manual.

The city says James Myers was the subject of an internal investigation when he intentionally withheld information from an internal police investigator. The city says Myers also used his position to inappropriately access documents he thought would help his case in a pending 5-day suspension.

"The public must be able to trust a police officer. That is an essential function of the position. At the point he was fired, Myers had lied several times and broken several rules. I would not be doing my job as City Manager if I allowed him to continue working for the city of Centerville," Centerville City Manager Wayne Davis said.

Davis says Myers' five-day suspension stems from more than a year before, when Myers wrote a letter disparaging the city in support of a city employee who was terminated in February 2019. The city terminated that public works employee after it says an investigation determined the employee's behavior included inappropriate touching as well as racist, sexist and homophobic language and behavior over an extended period of time.

"The public works employee's conduct was reprehensible and will never be tolerated," Davis said. "This is ultimately an issue of work culture and human decency. I hope the message is clear: intolerant and inappropriate behavior will not be permitted at the city of Centerville. City Council and staff have been steadfast in their determination to improve our work culture, and we will not allow this type of behavior in our work environment."

Personnel records obtained by the Dayton Daily News show Sgt. Myers received several warnings about honoring the chain of command and understanding his place in the organization in performance evaluations dating back to 1995.

Centerville Police Chief Matt Brown says he had a conversation with Myers in January 2018 where Brown specifically warned Myers not to get involved in disciplinary matters of other employees.

"Sergeant Myers received directives that told him his behavior was not permissible conduct and that he was not to get involved in personnel matters that did not involve him," Brown said.

The city says despite this directive, Myers wrote a letter on behalf of the Public Works employee in which he denigrated the City and criticized the decisions of city leadership.

The Dayton Daily News received a copy of that letter through a public records request, in which Myers referred to the inappropriate language as "shop or locker room talk" and wrote, "It seems to me a demotion, suspension and/or training would have corrected his alleged misconduct." Despite Myers'

acknowledgment that he was not part of the process, he went on to write in the letter that the City's actions were "ill-advised."

Davis says the investigation showed the Public Works employee's behavior was unacceptable in any workforce and does not come close to the high expectations of conduct by Centerville employees.

"While I am surely not proud of the behavior exhibited by the city's former public works employee, I am proud of our resolve in taking decisive, impartial action," Davis said.

Davis suspended Myers for five days after an investigation into the letter. Myers' appeal of his suspension with the Centerville Personnel Appeals Board is pending. Attorneys for Myers and the city submitted briefs in early April to board members, who will likely make a decision in May.

"The decision to suspend Myers for five days was not arrived at lightly. We have an outstanding police department full of employees of the highest integrity. There is no place in our department for an employee who does not represent these qualities or who supports others who do not represent them. I strongly considered termination instead of the suspension," Davis said.

Following the investigation and suspension, city leadership says it learned Myers secretly recorded an August 2018 meeting between Myers, Brown and Davis. At the time, the recording did not violate any law or police department rules; however, the city says Myers did not disclose the recording during the subsequent investigation. The disclosure was required under department policy.

"Myers intentionally withheld the highly-relevant recording and then lied about it on multiple occasions, despite the fact that the recording contained answers to questions Myers was being asked. These were questions that, when asked specifically, he could not recall, yet he had a complete tape recording of the meeting," Brown said.

Myers has maintained he did not disclose the recording at the recommendation of his attorney, but the city believes that does not excuse Myers' misconduct.

Joe Hegedus, spokesperson for the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, which represents the City's five police sergeants, told the Dayton Daily News that the organization strongly disagrees with the city's position in the matter and feels that the position is unsubstantiated in all factual documents and actions in the matter.

"Somehow the city has decided that Sgt. Myers is not on their team and I think his termination was expressly done to excise someone who is not afraid to speak out if he believes something is not being done correctly or is being done unfairly," Hegedus said.

Myers' termination will be set for arbitration in the coming months.
