

Personnel Action
Lieutenant Eric Jackson

Introduction:

Integrity in the public service, especially for police officers and persons who hold positions of authority in a civil society is not subject to a sliding scale. Whether it is one individual act or the accumulation of multiple incidents, the effect is not subject to different measurement.

There is a well articulated four-prong behavior standard for employees of the City of Decatur that it is not acceptable to lie, cheat, steal or purposely hurt another person. For the Decatur Police Department, Chief Booker has publically repeatedly at numerous public, City and department events that those who “lie, cheat or steal” will not be tolerated.

Lt. Jackson participated in the City’s grievance process, including a hearing before an independent hearing officer. The hearing officer’s reports provide an extensive recitation of the details and an exceptional analysis of the legal issues involved that will not be repeated here.

Discussion:

The first issue is whether or not the City of Decatur has to allow Lt. Jackson to rescind his resignation. It is clear that it is totally within the City’s discretion to make that decision. However, in light of issues raised by Lt. Jackson during the grievance hearing, presentation of his grievance before the hearing officer will be considered on its merits despite his resignation.

The facts are clearly established in the hearing officer’s report. Officer Speed found \$7.00 under the driver’s seat of a City of Decatur patrol car. The found money was divided between Officer Speed (\$5.00) and Lt. Jackson (\$2.00). The money did not belong to either Officer Speed or Lt. Jackson. A third officer refused any money. Approximately six to eight hours later, after receiving a text from the third officer urging him to post the money and report it, Lt. Jackson added \$5.00 to his \$2.00, posted the total of \$7.00 on the department bulletin board and sent an email announcing the found money. His corrective action was not taken within the time limit or within the procedures for found property that are established by the department but it did occur before any of his superior officers approached him.

The hearing officer found that Lt. Jackson’s intent with respect to the money could not be clearly established during the grievance hearing, because of the conflict between his actions at the time the money was found and the corrective action that took place at the

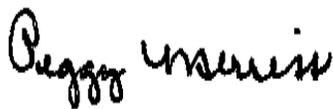
beginning of Lt. Jackson's next shift and prior to being confronted about the issue by IA or superior officers. In light of this finding, I concur with the conclusion of the hearing officer that the violation of the department's General Orders in regards to the Conformance of Laws cannot be sustained.¹

I further concur with the hearing officer's conclusion that Lt. Jackson violated the department's General Orders in regards to the responsibility of superior officers², Unbecoming conduct³, and Property and evidence⁴. Taken together, do these policy violations qualify as terminating events; or, would some lesser disciplinary action have been warranted that recognizes that Lt. Jackson did take corrective action, albeit late and not within Departmental policy and that his record is otherwise that of an outstanding officer for the City of Decatur Police Department.

Decision:

Upon review, I do not concur that termination would have been the appropriate action if Lt. Jackson had not resigned, but that the following be instituted:

1. Lt. Jackson will be reinstated retroactive to the date of his resignation, but demoted to the job classification of Master Police Officer with a three-step reduction in pay, from \$54,371 to \$50,482 and he will be placed on one-year probation with the department.
2. The period from October 21, 2016 – November 17, 2016 will be recorded as a four week suspension without pay.
3. Officer Jackson will provide both an oral and written apology to Chief Booker.
4. Officer Jackson will complete a course in Law Enforcement Ethics and Integrity or a substantially similar course selected by the Department within one year.



Peggy Merriss
City Manager

¹ See pages 11-13 of Hearing Officer's Report "In the matter of Eric Jackson."

² See page 13 of Hearing Officer's Report "In the matter of Eric Jackson."

³ See page 13 of Hearing Officer's Report "In the matter of Eric Jackson."

⁴ See page 14-15 of Hearing Officer's Report "In the matter of Eric Jackson."