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Statement to Dan Whisenhunt

The document you received was filed by Ms. Christensen's attorneys in connection with an administrative appeal hearing that is scheduled tomorrow before the City of Decatur Employee Retirement System Board of Trustees. The scope of this hearing is limited, as described in the letter brief filed by counsel for the Retirement System. As noted in the letter brief, a copy of which is attached, the Retirement Board does not have the power or authority to provide much of the relief requested. The Retirement Board—which consists of City employees, community members and City officials—applies the terms of the Retirement System Plan to determine amounts due retirees from the System. You can learn more about the complex issues presented by attending the hearing. It will be held in the City Commission meeting room at City Hall beginning at 9:30 a.m.

As you know, Ms. Christensen filed a lawsuit against the City in federal court in October 2020. The lawsuit alleges the same things stated in the brief you were provided. Because this case remains pending, the City is limited in what it can say about the allegations. However, the City's positions are set forth in the various pleadings in the case, which can be accessed via Pacer: www.pacer.login.uscourts.gov. For your benefit, I am attaching a copy of Judge Amy Totenberg's Order of March 31, 2022.

In response to your specific questions, I am attaching a copy of the letter of termination provided to former Human Resources Director, Connie Jacobs-Walton, on March 6, 2020. This document was produced to Ms. Christensen's attorneys pursuant to an Open Records Act request.

Finally, you well know that the City of Decatur is committed to the values of equity, inclusion and diversity. As an employer and a community, we uphold the importance of creating a community and a workplace that is welcoming to all. The city has hired, retained and promoted a number of LGBTQ+ identifying employees into leadership roles. In 2013, the City adopted a Domestic Partnership program at a time when the State of Georgia did not recognize domestic partnerships. In 2019, Decatur became the sixth Georgia city to adopt a Non-Discrimination Ordinance that prohibits all forms of discrimination including discrimination based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, marital status, familial status or veteran/military status of all persons who live in, work in or visit the City of Decatur.

Again, I encourage you to attend tomorrow's Retirement Board meeting, and to review the legal pleadings to inform your reporting.

Teresa de Castro, Assistant City Manager