



MT. MORRIS TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT

Date: May 20, 2021

To: Mt. Morris Twp. Board of Trustees

From: Chief Michael Veach

Ref: Accusations against CFO Greg Eason

On Monday May 10, 2021 at the Mt. Morris Township Board meeting during board member comments Mrs. Armstrong made the accusations the Mr. Eason had made comments towards her that she does not get to talk to him and that she is a nobody. During the meeting Mrs. Armstrong also stated that Mr. Eason swung his cane in her direction. Trustee Mr. Wilson did suggest that I, Chief Michael Veach do an investigation into these allegations and interview all the individuals that were present during the altercation. Video footage of the Board meeting was downloaded on to a disc as well as surveillance camera footage from the Treasurers office.

Video Surveillance footage of Board Room:

Towards the end of the Board meeting, Board comments started at **5:51:19**: according to the video footage, Mr. Wilson expressed his concerns followed by Mrs. Loper and Ms. King. At **6:05:35**: Mrs. Armstrong was given the opportunity to speak. Ms. Armstrong made the following comments. "The Finance director is not doing his job, he does not recognize me and Mrs. Ashley as elected officials, he tells us all the time we are not. When we make any comments at all he almost gets violent. He came very close to hitting me the other day, because I did not want him to make Sonja do something that she did not want to do. He wanted her to go to his office with him, Sonja said I can't, I'm very uncomfortable I don't want to go there alone." Mrs. Armstrong followed up by saying "I'd go with her and Greg replied oh no, no, no, no, you're nothing, get away from me you're nothing."

At **6:15:15**: Ms. King spoke up and stated "I have to ask Mrs. Armstrong straight up, what does almost violent mean? I don't know what that means, what did he specifically do that you would consider almost violent, because to me you are either violent or you're not."

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6:15:31: Mrs. Armstrong responds to Ms. King "When I heard the altercation I was in my office, he (Mr. Eason) was standing in front of Sonya's desk saying you come with me Sonya, come, come, come. I walked up to her (Sonja) she kept saying no, no I'm not going. I said what is going on and Sonya replied Greg wants me to go to his office with him, I told him I want someone to go with me, I'm not comfortable being alone with him." Mrs. Armstrong stated "I'll go with you" According to Mrs. Armstrong Greg then stated you will not go, you are nothing, and Jolena is going to get rid of you and Brenda.

6:16:13: Mrs. Armstrong stated "When I tried to step in between him (Mr. Eason) and Sonya, he just kept coming towards her, he took his cane and pushed me back, and I really thought he was going to hit me."

6:16:18: Mrs. Armstrong swung her right arm to show how Mr. Eason took his cane to "push her back."

Video Surveillance footage of Treasurers office:

Surveillance footage was pulled from Thursday April 28, 2021.

At 11:13:22: Mr. Eason is observed walking up to Sonya's desk on Treasure office #2 camera. At this time it appears in the lower right-hand corner of the screen that Marilyn Miller is speaking to Mr. Eason as he is walking towards Sonja's Desk. Mr. Eason stops and has a brief conversation with Sonja. Jennifer Watts is observed sitting at her desk.

11:14:09: Mr. Eason takes a few steps away from Sonya's desk and Marilyn Miller goes back to some paperwork that is on the filing cabinets in front of Sonya's desk. During this time, it appears that Mr. Eason stops turns around and continues his conversation with Sonya.

11:14:16: Ms. Ashley is observed on Treasure office Cam #1 to exit her office and begins sorting paperwork near the window. During the time it appears that Mr. Eason is still speaking with Sonya as he is standing facing her desk.

11:15:35: Ms. Ashley walks into Mrs. Armstrong's office.

11:15:46: Mrs. Armstrong exits her office and walks towards the area where Mr. Eason and Sonya are speaking.

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11:16:06: on Treasure office cam #1 Mrs. Armstrong comes into the frame and Mr. Eason can be seen stepping in front of Ms. Armstrong with his back to her while he speaks to Sonja. Mr. Eason slowly steps to the side and at this time Mrs. Armstrong positions herself between Sonja and Mr. Eason. Mr. Eason is now standing in front of Sonya's desk, speaking with Mrs. Armstrong.

11:17:32: Mrs. Armstrong takes 2 to 3 steps forward and is now directly in front of Mr. Eason shaking her finger as she speaks to him. They are now toe to toe and Mr. Eason is seen taking a step back. Both Mr. Eason and Mrs. Armstrong are observed using their hands as they appear to be arguing with one another. This altercation can be observed on Treasure Office Hallway #1 camera.

11:18:00: Mrs. Armstrong backs up and is now between Sonya's desk and a file cabinet.

11:18:12: Mr. Eason walks away back towards his office.

11:19:51: Linda Spearling is observed leaving her office and entering the Clerk's office. From Treasurer office Hallway cam #1, Ms. Sims can also be seen walking down the hallway from her office towards the Clerks office.

11:21:28: Ms. Sims, Linda Sperling and Sonya are observed walking towards Mr. Eason's office.

Interview with Sonya Burns:

On Tuesday May 11, 2021, I did sit down and spoke with Sonya Burns. Ms. Burns stated that on April 28th around 11 a.m. Mr. Eason did come to her desk and said to her "Come with me" Sonya asked where they were going and Mr. Eason replied Sonya come. Sonya stated she was not comfortable going without someone else (meaning her Union steward) Sonya stated she asked again where are we going and Mr. Eason replied "to Jolena's office" Sonya stated she would go but wanted someone to go with her. Sonya advised Mr. Eason that she was not refusing to go with him, but she wanted someone to be present with her. I did ask Sonya if any threats were made by either Mr. Eason or Mrs. Armstrong and Sonya stated no. I did ask if any physical altercation took place and Sonya said no. Sonya stated Mr. Eason and Mrs. Armstrong were face to face and were only yelling. I did ask Sonya if Mr. Eason raised his cane or swing his arm and Sonya stated she did not see that.

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Interview with Jennifer Watts:

When I sat down with Mrs. Watts I advised her why we were meeting together and informed that at the board meeting which took place the day prior on May 10th, Mrs. Armstrong made accusations against Mr. Eason, stating that Mr. Eason swung his cane. Mrs. Watts replied and stated "I did not see that." Mrs. Watts stated she did not recall exactly what was said but did remember Mrs. Armstrong state something to the effect of she's scared, you guys are confronting her, she's scared. Mrs. Watts stated the altercation became hostile between Mrs. Armstrong and Mr. Eason. Mrs. Watts recalled Mr. Eason say, so your saying you're not coming with me Sonya, to which Sonya replied that's not what I am saying at all. Mrs. Watts stated "He kind of accused her of not doing what he told her to do and that's not what happened, and then he just kept saying Sonya come, Sonya come." Mrs. Watts said the way he said it was very rude and it sounded like he was talking to a dog. Mrs. Watts heard Sonya say I don't have a problem going with you and then she said I want Linda to come with me. Mrs. Watts stated that Mr. Eason has been nothing but professional towards her however she felt the altercation between Mrs. Armstrong and Mr. Eason was very unprofessional on both their parts. I asked Mrs. Watts if there were any racial remarks made during the altercation and she stated she did not hear any racial remarks. I also asked Mrs. Watts if she observed Mr. Eason raise his cane and she stated she did not, but if he did raise it she would not have been able to see it since she was sitting at her desk and there is a divider/filing cabinet between where she was seated and Sonya's desk.

Interview with Jody Hoadley:

I sat down with Jody and informed her that accusations were made at the board meeting and I wanted to know if she observed an altercation between Mr. Eason and Mrs. Armstrong. Jody stated she was returning back to the office from her lunch break and was picking up a cake for Bill Mcillmurray. Jody stated when she walked in she observed Mrs. Armstrong and Mr. Eason talking with "Elevated voices" Jody stated she heard Mr. Eason say to Mrs. Armstrong that "You are nothing" Mrs. Armstrong was heard stating something along the lines of "You are an employee and I am a board member" to Mr. Eason. Jody stated she did not observe the altercation because when she came in she went straight to her desk. I did ask Jody if she observed Mr. Eason raise his cane, she did not. I did ask if Mrs. Armstrong made mention of Mr. Eason raising his cane during the altercation and Jody stated yes, that Mrs. Armstrong



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mentioned that she was trying to get in between Mr. Eason and Sonya and he was trying to back her up. Jody did not witness this, this is only what she was told after the altercation.

Interview with Marilyn Miller:

I did sit down with Ms. Miller and she stated she was talking with Sonya when Mr. Eason approached. Mr. Eason wanted to meet with Sonja and Sonya asked what was the meeting about and Mr. Eason replied that he would tell her when they went in to meet. Sonya asked can you tell me what its about, and Mr. Eason asked "Are you refusing to go?" Sonja replied that she did not feel comfortable and said she preferred someone to come with her. Ms. Miller recalls Mrs. Armstrong coming out of her office and telling Mr. Eason she (Sonya) is not going anywhere with you by herself. Mr. Eason replied and was speaking to Sonya stating don't lister to her, she is nothing. Mrs. Armstrong stated she does not want to go with you by herself to which Mr. Eason replied well nobody likes you, and Mrs. Armstrong replied well nobody likes you either. I did ask Ms. Miller if any racial comments were made and she stated that Mrs. Armstrong did not say anything racial. I asked Ms. Miller if Mr. Eason raised his cane and she stated that he had his cane in front of him in a "guarded position." Ms. Miller stated at one point the cane was extended out, but does not recall the cane being raised off the ground. Ms. Miller felt that Mr. Eason's behavior was bullying Sonya and Mrs. Armstrong. Ms. Miller was asked if any threats were made by either Mr. Eason or Mrs. Armstrong and she stated she did not recall any threats being made.

Interview with Greg Eason:

I did meet with Mr. Eason and informed him of what was said at the board meeting on May 10th. Mr. Eason stated that he went to Sonya and asked if he could speak with her, and Sonya replied well I don't feel comfortable, Mr. Eason stated he asked Sonya why she did not feel comfortable. Sonya stated because I am hearing different things and I am getting mixed messages. Mr. Eason stated he asked Sonya what type of mixed messages are you getting. He stated he sent Sonya an email requesting to sit down with her to discuss her job description because there are a number of things that she does that has nothing to do with IT. Mr. Eason stated that Sonya made the comment to him that his intent is to get rid of her job. Mr. Eason stated he informed Sonya that he does not have the authority to hire or fire anyone and that she is protected under the collective bargaining agreement. Mr. Eason stated he wanted to speak with Sonya about her duties that she is responsible for outside of doing IT. Mr. Eason sent Sonya an email explaining a transition phase and wanted to speak with her regarding it, and when he attempted to have a conversation



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with Sonja Mrs. Armstrong came out of her office and was attempting to prevent him from speaking with Sonja. Mr. Eason stated he never raised his cane to anyone and has never threatened anybody.

Interview with Clerk Brenda Ashley:

Township Clerk Ms. Ashley did come to my office and we did speak about the incident that took place in the treasurer's office. Ms. Ashely stated she was near the copy machine and did overhear Mr. Eason say to Sonya "Are you refusing me?" "You don't want to come with me?" Ms. Ashley further stated that she heard Sonya reply to Mr. Eason that she did not feel comfortable. Mr. Eason repeated Sonya come, Sonya come. Which Ms. Ashley thought this sounded as if he was calling a dog. According to Ms. Ashley she felt that the questioning was starting to escalate and she went to Mrs. Armstrong's office and told her she may want to come out here. At this time Mrs. Armstrong left her office and asked what was going on, Ms. Ashely stated she overheard Mr. Eason respond, that is none of your concern. Ms. Ashely stated that Mr. Eason went further and made the statement directed at Mrs. Armstrong "It's none of your business, you are nothing." Ms. Ashely observed Mrs. Armstrong to step in between Sonya and Mr. Eason at which time Ms. Ashley observed Mr. Eason to swing his left arm towards Mrs. Armstrong. Ms. Ashely also stated that during the altercation Mr. Eason was pounding his cane on the floor. Sonya was heard asking for her union steward if she were to meet with Mr. Eason.

Interview with Treasurer Gayle Armstrong:

Township Treasurer Gayle Armstrong did come to my officer and spoke to me regarding the incident that took place on April 28th 2021, near Sonya's desk. Mrs. Armstrong stated that she over heard Mr. Eason saying "Let's go back to my office, Sonya Come, Sonya come." Mrs. Armstrong also stated that Mr. Eason made the comment directed at her "You have no power here, Jolena hired me to reorganize the township." Mrs. Armstrong advised Mr. Eason that Sonya did not want to go with him to his office and that she does not have to. Mrs. Armstrong then stated that Mr. Eason swung his left arm in her direction, but did not make contact. During this altercation Mrs. Armstrong also stated the Mr. Eason was reaching out towards Sonya, and was beating his can against the floor.



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Interview with Supervisor Jolena Sims:

On Monday May 17, 2021 I did sit down and speak with Ms. Sims in her office regarding the incident that took place on April 28th 2021. Ms. Sims stated that on that day she had a meeting with Mr. Eason, Linda Sperling, and Sonya Burns in Mr. Eason's office regarding the IT position. Ms. Sims advised me that Mr. Eason informed her that Mrs. Armstrong was giving push back on the restructuring/reorganizing plan involving Sonya and her position. Ms. Sims was unaware of the accusations that Mr. Eason swung his arm and/or cain at Mrs. Armstrong, until it was brought to her attention after the board meeting on May 10, 2021.

Findings:

During the Mt. Morris Township Board meeting that took place on May 10, 2021. Township treasurer Gayle Armstrong made the accusations that the Township CFO Greg Eason "took his cane and pushed me back, and I really thought he was going to hit me."

The video surveillance from Treasure office #2 camera and Treasure office Hallway Cam #1 does not support this claim that Mr. Eason Swung his cain or that he swung his left arm towards Mrs. Armstrong. The Video evidence also does not support the claim that Mr. Eason reached out towards Sonya. The video evidence does not support the claim that Mr. Eason was beating and/or pounding his cain on the floor. The video evidence as noted earlier in this investigation does show Mr. Eason approach Sonya's desk. The video evidence shows Mr. Eason having a conversation with Sonya, however it is unknown what is said during this time since the video is strictly video and not audio recorded. Mrs. Armstrong is seen exiting her office and approaching Mr. Eason. At one point in time both Mr. Eason and Mrs. Armstrong are toe to toe and both are talking with their hands. At no point during the video does Mr. Eason or Mrs. Armstrong raise their hands towards one another or in a threatening manner.

During the interviewing of the witnesses of the incident it was found that no one observed Mr. Eason to swing his arm or his cain, except for Ms. Ashley and Mrs. Armstrong. Sonya Burns and Marilyn Miller were both within a few feet of the altercation and neither one of them witnessed a swinging of Mr. Eason's arm or his cain.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chief Michael Veach