



News Release

GALLATIN OFFICER ADDRESSES NUISANCE COMPLAINTS

Complaints by Neighbors Trigger Most Enforcement Actions

Gallatin – Jessica Jackson is a Property Maintenance and Codes Enforcement Officer with the Gallatin Police Department (GPD). Like other officers, she wears a badge, drives a police cruiser, and carries a gun, but Jackson's beat is unlike others. Jackson is charged with enforcing residential and commercial codes; issues where residents have a hard time finding who can help them to address nuisance matters in their neighborhood.

"A large portion of people are surprised that a police officer is handling property maintenance complaints," said Officer Jackson. "I have been handling these complaints for about nine years now so many locals have been referred to me from all kinds of sources."

When Jackson receives a complaint, she determines if it is valid or something that is better handled by Gallatin Codes. A letter of notification is sent to the owner of the property. Jackson then waits ten business days for trash and grass complaints, or approximately 30 days for vehicle and housing complaints. A re-inspection is then conducted to determine if the issue is resolved. If not, grass and trash complaints are referred to the city to complete the cleanup. A special assessment is then placed on the property for the cost of the cleanup. If it is a vehicle or housing complaint, a citation is sent via certified mail for the owner to appear in City Court to receive a judgement. In 2021, the city cleaned up 26 properties resulting in special assessments being placed on the parcel's city taxes. 14 property owners were issued citations.

Officer Jackson says there are about 50 open cases she is working right now. The majority of wintertime cases deal with litter and summertime cases with unkept grass. Gallatin codes requires grass be no longer than 12 inches tall and that inoperative or unlicensed motor vehicles should not be parked, kept or stored on any premises including those in a state of major disassembly, disrepair, or in the process of being stripped or dismantled. Painting of vehicles is prohibited unless conducted inside an approved spray booth. She says it's not unusual for an inspection of one complaint to lead to several codes violations on the same property.

Bulk items, such as kitchen appliances and tires, left in a yard that are not eligible for city pickup can also cause a codes enforcement action.

Officer Jackson says the most misunderstood part of her job is the timeline in which something can be done.

"A lot of people don't understand it's a process, and they get mad when the complaint isn't resolved immediately," says Jackson. "The code requires me to do certain things and that takes time."

If you live within the City of Gallatin and need assistance with a codes-related issue. Contact Officer Jessica Jackson at GPD's non-emergency number 615-527-7201, email her at Jessica.jackson@gallatinpd.org (the preferred method) or the city's "Ask Angela" link at gallatintn.gov.

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Photo: Jessica Jackson, Property Maintenance and Codes Enforcement Officer, Gallatin Police Department