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Memorandum
City Manager's Office

WEST COVINA CORPORATION

Date: August 9, 2022

To: Human Resources Director Helen Tran

From: David Carmany
City Manager

Subject: Incident of August 6th – Fire Department Badge Pinning Ceremony

I attended the August 6, 2022, West Covina Fire Department Badge Pinning Ceremony at Fire Station 2 and sat in the back row next to Assistant City Clerk Lisa Sherrick, HR Director Helen Tran, and Police Chief Richard Bell.

During the event, Councilmember Wu walked to the stage multiple times and said something to Fire Chief Capelle. I could not hear what was said. After the ceremonies ended, Chief Bell saw Councilmember Wu point his finger at Fire Chief Capelle and heard Mr. Wu shout: "DON'T YOU EVER FUCKING DISRESPECT ME AGAIN". This occurred in the presence of multiple people including Fire Department personnel and the Fire Chief's wife. After seeing the incident, Assistant City Manager Roxanne Lerma walked over to me and reported Councilmember Wu was agitated because State Senator Josh Newman was not afforded the opportunity to speak.

Mayor Pro Tem Rosario Diaz who had witnessed the encounter walked toward HR Director Tran and said "Oh my God I'm leaving. This is not his show". Councilmember Wu said to HR Director Helen Tran "Why are we giving Fire anything if the Chief doesn't listen? Stop hiring firefighters and cut the Fire Department budget". State Senator Josh Newman pulled Fire Chief Capelle aside and consoled him.

After this encounter, Fire Chief Capelle motioned and asked to speak with me in the kitchen. Chief Capelle was upset at the poor way he was treated. Tony Wu's rant continued for about an hour, until Mayor Castellanos, Councilmember Wu and I left the event at about 12 noon.

Councilmember Wu was clearly quite upset. While being served cake, Fire Chief Capelle walked up to Mayor Dario Castellanos, Tony Wu and I to explain that in fact two weeks before the event the State Senator had been offered the opportunity to speak.

Later that weekend, I spoke with Mayor Dario Castellanos who said Tony Wu's outburst in front of Chief Capelle's wife and staff was unacceptable and could cause a hostile work environment for Fire Chief Capelle. On Tuesday, August 9, 2022, I told Councilmember Wu that we want to "avoid creating a hostile work environment". He said he did not "give a damn" and suggested I fire Vince Capelle.