

Investigation into Alleged Violation by Andrew Stevens

Prepared by

**Mary Beth Neeson
SR Human Resource Analyst**

**City of Sammamish
November 25, 2019**

Andrew Stevens Investigative Report

Allegations

Mr. Andrew Stevens has been accused of violating employee handbook policy **6.4 Violence:**

“Any act or threat of violence by or against any employee, customer, supplier, partner or visitor is strictly prohibited. This policy applies to all City employees, whether on or off City property.

Employees should promptly warn their supervisor or Human Resources of any suspicious workplace activity, situations, or incidents they observe or are aware of that appear problematic. **This includes, for example, threats or acts of violence, aggressive behavior, offensive acts, and threatening or offensive comments.** Employee reports made pursuant to this policy will be held in confidence to the maximum possible extent. The City will not condone any form of retaliation against any employee for making a report under this policy.”

Mr. Stevens admitted to stating, “If a man would have come up to me in a bar and insulted my wife to my face, this would have ended very differently.”

Employee History

Andrew Stevens has been employed at City of Sammamish since February 14, 2017 as the Emergency Manager. He has no previous disciplinary action in his employee file.

Investigation Meeting Participants

- Andrew Stevens, Emergency Manger
- Pam Stuart, Sammamish Councilwoman
- Rick Rudometkin, previous City Manager
- Tony Hudson, Office Assistant Community Development
- Mary Beth Neeson, Senior Human Resource Analyst

A meeting was held on November 14, 2019 with Councilwoman Pam Stuart concerning the conversation between herself and Mr. Stevens. An investigative meeting was held on November 20, 2019 between Mr. Stevens and Mary Beth Neeson, to collect additional information pertaining to the November 7 interaction between Mr. Stevens and Councilwoman Stuart. Witness Tony Hudson was interviewed on November 14, 2019.

Investigation Summary of Incident

On November 7, 2019 at approximately 8:00am, Councilwoman Stuart crossed paths with Mr. Stevens while he was entering City offices to begin his work day. She was exiting from a meeting with previous City Manager, Rick Rudometkin.

She felt compelled to tell Mr. Stevens what a good job he was doing as Emergency Manager but that during the election, Mr. Stevens wife had gotten very mean on Facebook. Mr. Stevens then stated he felt her comment was inappropriate. He immediately went to Rick Rudometkin to recap

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what had transpired between Councilwoman Stuart and himself. He stated that he felt harassed and threatened and thought it extremely inappropriate for her to approach him about his wife.

As Mr. Stevens walked away from the City Manager he stated, "If she wasn't a woman, I would have popped her one." Mr. Stevens proceeded to the front counter to speak with the staff and ask if any of them had heard the conversation that took place between himself and Councilwoman Stuart. Tony Hudson said he had only heard a portion of the conversation. According to Mr. Hudson, Mr. Stevens repeated what Councilwoman Stuart said about his wife, then stated, "If she wasn't a woman, I would have popped her one." Councilwoman Stuart was informed by an employee, who wished to remain anonymous, what Mr. Stevens had said. She immediately felt threatened and filed a police report.

Interview with Pam Stuart on November 14, 2019

Councilwoman Pam Stuart ran into Andrew Stevens on November 7, 2019 at 8:00am while leaving the city hall office area following her weekly Thursday morning meeting with previous City Manager Rick Rudometkin. She felt compelled to tell Mr. Stevens that he did a very good job as City Emergency Manager but that during the election, his wife Stephanie was very mean on Facebook. Mr. Stevens replied to the comment by saying, the Councilwoman's comment was odd and he walked away.

The councilwoman was informed by staff, who wished to stay anonymous, that Mr. Stevens went to the City Manager and voiced his opinion about the incident. She was also told that Mr. Stevens added the comment while walking through the main corridor from the City Manager's office, "If Pam Stuart wasn't a woman and said that about my wife, I would have popped the guy one!" Councilwoman Stuart was also informed by front counter staff, that Mr. Stevens made the same comment to Tony Hudson, Office Assistant for Community Development, who staffs the front counter.

Upon hearing this information, Councilwoman Stuart stated that she felt very threatened and scared for her safety, as well as the safety of her family. She has a thirteen year-old daughter and is very concerned that they will go after her. She feels that both Mr. and Mrs. Stevens are dangerous people, based on what she has read on Facebook. She stated that Mrs. Stevens family, in California, are politically active and are very dangerous people. She stated she is especially scared of Mrs. Stevens because her family has done terrible things to people.

Councilwoman Stuart filed a police report about the incident but was told by the police that Mr. Stevens did not present a direct threat, as the comments were second hand information.

Interview with Tony Hudson on November 14, 2019

Mr. Tony Hudson was starting his work day at the front counter of City Hall on Thursday November 7, 2019 when Councilwoman Stuart and Mr. Stevens had their conversation by the front door of the City offices. He overheard her state that Mr. Stevens does a great job but heard nothing else. Mr. Hudson stated that he was very busy doing his job and was not paying attention to their conversation. Shortly after, Mr. Stevens approached the front counter and asked if Mr. Hudson had

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overheard what Councilwoman Stuart had said to him. Mr. Hudson replied that he had only heard a portion of it. Mr. Stevens reiterated what she said then stated, "If she were a man and said insulted my wife, I would have popped the guy one!"

Interview with Andrew Stevens November 12, 2019

Mr. Andrew Stevens was approached by Councilwoman Pam Stuart while entering the City Hall office area on November 7, 2019 just before 8:00am. She stopped him and stated, "We think you do a good job". Mr. Stevens replied with thank you. She then went on to say, "but your wife is really mean". Mr. Stevens replied by telling her that her comment was inappropriate. He then proceeded directly to the City Manager's office to inform him what had just transpired.

Mr. Stevens stated her comment felt like she was threatening his job and retaliating against him. His wife is politically active but does not support Councilwoman Stuart. Mr. Stevens said his wife had conducted a "Get out and Vote" campaign as well as supported the current City Mayor.

Mr. Stevens felt that councilwoman Stuart was retaliating against him. She had publicly confronted Mr. Stevens wife and other people that are politically active in the community. In one incident, councilwoman Stuart shouted out of her car window at Mrs. Stevens and her children, in front of Safeway Supermarket in Sammamish. She yelled that Mrs. Stevens was very mean and politically misinformed.

As Mr. Stevens was walking away from speaking with the City Manager, after telling him what had happened that morning, he stated, "If a man would have come up to me in a bar and insulted my wife to my face, this would have ended very differently." Mr. Stevens then repeated a similar comment to front desk staff. When asked if he had threatened to hit Congresswoman Stuart he firmly stated in no way, shape, or form, had he directly or indirectly threatened Pam Stuart. He stated it was an off-hand comment and he meant nothing by it.

Mr. Stevens also reiterated the fact that Councilwoman Stuart approached him, making a derogatory comment about his wife. He commented that this incident had been trumped up to deflect from her inappropriate behavior. Mr. Stevens stated, "I did not threaten Councilwoman Stuart and this has been taken out of context to retaliate against me and my family for not politically supporting her He added as well, that no council person should be able to go after staff the way she is targeting him.

Facts:

- November 7, 2019 at 8:00am, Councilwoman Pam Stuart stopped City Emergency Manager Andrew Stevens and stated he does a great job but his wife is mean on social media. Mr. Stevens felt his job was being threatened and immediately, following the initial encounter, reported the incident to the City Manager. (Attachment 1)
- As he walked away from the meeting, he was overheard saying, "If she were a man and said that about my wife, I would have popped the guy one!" (Attachment 2)
- Mr. Stevens approached the front customer service desk to find out who had overheard the conversation between himself and councilwoman Stuart. Mr. Hudson stated he had only

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heard a portion of it. Mr. Stevens then stated what she had said about his wife again, "If she were a man and insulted my wife, I would have popped the guy one!" (Attachment 3)

- Councilwoman Stuart was informed about his comments by an anonymous City employee. (Attachment 4)
- She contacted the City Manager and requested action against Mr. Stevens for threatening physical violence. Councilwoman Stuart stated that she feels threatened and scared for her family, especially her teenage daughter. (Attachment 5)
- Councilwoman Stuart filed a police report but was told by the police that Mr. Stevens did not present a direct threat, as the comments were second hand information.
- Mr. Stevens stated that he felt harassed by Councilwoman Stuart. He stated the Councilwoman had multiple times approached his wife in public settings and yelled at her. Mr. Stevens feels this whole incident is politically motivated and a form of retaliation because his wife supports the current Mayor. (Attachment 6)

Disputes:

Although Councilwoman Stuart approached Mr. Stevens with what can be construed as a derogatory statement concerning his wife, the issue remains that Mr. Stevens comments, following the incident, may suggest physical violence for making the statement.

Summary

The evidence supporting the allegation that Andrew Stevens violated Safety Policy 6.4, obtained through interviews with both Councilwoman Stuart and city employees, show an infraction of the rule. As reported by Councilwoman Stuart, upon filing a police report regarding the incident, was told by the Public Safety authority that Mr. Stevens did not directly threaten her. However, the comments made to staff by Mr. Stevens are both aggressive and offensive in nature.

Attachment 1

Mary Beth Neeson

From: Andrew Stevens
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 12:23 PM
To: Rick Rudometkin
Cc: Mary Beth Neeson
Subject: RE: Councilmember Stuart

Thank you sir.

Andrew Stevens, CEM

Emergency Manager - City of Sammamish
astevens@sammamish.us
w. 425-295-0549 | c. 206-450-4809
801 228th Ave. SE | Sammamish, WA 98075

From: Rick Rudometkin <RRudometkin@sammamish.us>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 12:21 PM
To: Andrew Stevens <astevens@sammamish.us>
Cc: Mary Beth Neeson <MBethNeeson@sammamish.us>
Subject: RE: Councilmember Stuart

Andrew,

I will talk with Mary Beth on this when she returns on Tuesday.

Rick J Rudometkin

City Manager
City of Sammamish
Ph: 425-295-0550
Fx: 425-295-0600
rrudometkin@sammamish.us

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From: Andrew Stevens <astevens@sammamish.us>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 8:40 AM
To: Rick Rudometkin <RRudometkin@sammamish.us>
Cc: Mary Beth Neeson <MBethNeeson@sammamish.us>
Subject: Councilmember Stuart

Good morning sir,

I have to bring to your attention something troubling that happened this morning when I arrived to work. As I was walking into the office this morning, I was stopped by Councilmember Pam Stuart. She said, "Andrew, we think you do a really good job." I responded with "Thank you". She then went on to say, "But I think your wife is really mean." Taken

back, by this clear intrusion into my personal life, I simply responded with "Well, I don't think that is appropriate to say" and I walked away.

I am very frustrated by an elected official, one of my superiors, feeling that they can come into my place of work and insult my family. It is hostile, unprofessional, and in my opinion threatening. Who my wife chooses to support politically has zero relationship to my duties as a city employee, nor have I chooses to involve myself in them. However, the hostilities shown by Councilmember Stuart to me this morning against my family have me worried that there may be some retaliatory consequences.

Thank you.

Andrew Stevens, CEM

Emergency Manager - City of Sammamish

astevens@sammamish.us

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Attachment 2

Mary Beth Neeson

From: Andrew Stevens
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2019 2:04 PM
To: Mary Beth Neeson
Subject: Statement

Mary Beth,

Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me this afternoon. As I stated during our discussion, I wanted to make it absolutely clear that I, in no way, threatened Councilmember Stuart after she insulted my wife. Following the incident, I made a comment entirely unrelated to the situation, simply to highlight what I believed to be the audacity of the comment at my workplace. What I jokingly said outside of Rick's office was, "I can't believe that just happened. If a man had come up to me in a bar and insulted my wife to my face then it would have ended very differently." This was simply a hypothetical comment and in no way was directed towards anyone, especially Councilmember Stuart.

I responded to Councilmember's insult by simply stating that it was inappropriate and then walking away. I feel that was a very appropriate response and was done so to defuse the situation entirely.

Thank you,

Andrew Stevens, CEM
Emergency Manager - City of Sammamish
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Attachment 3

Investigative Interview

November 14, 2019

Tony Hudson

Andrew Stevens / Pam Steward Case

Tony was at the front desk, opening up City Hall, when Andrew Stevens arrived at work and Pam Steward was exiting the city offices. Pam stopped Andrew on the way out. Tony could hear Pam tell Andrew that he did a really good job as the City's Emergency Manager. Tony then got very busy doing his job and stated he was no longer tuned in to what was being said. Shortly after, Andrew stepped up to the front window and asked Tony if he had heard what Pam had said to him? Tony stated he hadn't really been paying attention. Andrew then said, "If she wasn't a woman and said that about my wife, I would have popped the guy one".

Attachment 4

Mary Beth Neeson

From: Rick Rudometkin
Sent: Tuesday, November 12, 2019 8:02 AM
To: Mary Beth Neeson
Subject: FW: Follow Up

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Rick J Rudometkin

City Manager
City of Sammamish
Ph: 425-295-0550
Fx: 425-295-0600
rrudometkin@sammamish.us


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From: Pam Stuart <pstuart@sammamish.us>
Sent: Saturday, November 9, 2019 12:35 PM
To: Rick Rudometkin <RRudometkin@sammamish.us>
Subject: Follow Up

Rick, I just want to follow up on the incident from Thursday and ensure that HR has documented the comments that Andrew made to other city employees about punching me if I were not a woman.

Please let me know if I need to file a report or speak with HR.

Thank you 

Pam Stuart

City Council



Attachment 5

Investigative Interview

November 14, 2019

Pam Stewart

Andrew Stevens / Pam Stewart Case

Pam Stewart stated she had run into Andrew Stevens on Thursday November 7, upon exiting the city offices. She felt compelled to tell Andrew what a good job he did as City Emergency Manager but that during the election, Andrew's wife had gotten very mean on face book. Pam stated Andrew made a comment to her that he thought her statement was odd and walked away.

Pam was then informed by sources who wanted to stay anonymous that Andrew had told multiple people that if Pam wasn't a woman, and talked about his wife like that, he would have punched her. She stated that this made her extremely scared for her and her family. She has looked up Stephanie Stevens on Facebook and Stephanie and her family, back in California, are dangerous people. They have done terrible things to other people.

That Andrew and Stephanie were potentially dangerous. Pam filed a police report saying she was scared and felt threatened. Pam stated she was scared for her family, especially her 13 year old daughter. She wanted to know if Andrew had impulse control issues.

Pam stated that the police told her that Andrew's statement was not a direct threat.

Attachment 6

Mary Beth Neeson

From: Andrew Stevens
Sent: Friday, November 22, 2019 3:16 PM
To: Mary Beth Neeson
Subject: Follow-up

Good afternoon Mary Beth,

I would like to offer this additional information to be included in your investigation of when Councilmember Pam Stuart approached me and verbally assaulted me by insulting my wife and threatening me at City Hall. As I stated in my prior email, Councilmember Stuart inappropriately approached me at work just after 8 O'clock in the morning on Thursday, November 7th. This took place entering the staff area near the front of City Hall, near the entrance to the cubicles and the lobby. So there's no confusion, I'll share the dialog again:

Councilmember Stuart: "Andrew, We think you do a really good job."

Me: "Thank you."

Councilmember Stuart: "But I think your wife is really mean."

Me: " Well, I don't think that is appropriate to say."

...and then I walked away stunned.

You will note from your records that I immediately reported the incident to you in HR and our City Manager. I was shaken, what had transpired was unethical and felt like I have a target on my back. Just after I sent the email, I went to the City Manager's office as we were already scheduled to meet but I went a few minutes early because I wanted to be sure he'd seen my email. We discussed the incident at length.

Since then, and upon learning that the incident was reported to the City Manager and HR, Councilmember Stuart has chosen to retaliate by taking third-party hearsay and trying to file a false police report. I confirmed this by speaking with PD. Her attack on me is entirely based on her own objections to my wife's participation in recent Get Out the Vote efforts and launching a community engagement initiative to increase civic participation. In the months leading up to the election, the councilmember has aggressively confronted my wife and her peers numerous times due to political differences. By bringing her dislike for my spouse into my workplace and further pressuring city staff to punish me, she is creating a hostile and untenable work environment. By confronting me at work, and threatening me with "we think you do a good job, but..." I can only assume the councilmember thinks I need to tell my wife, a City of Sammamish resident, that she must refrain from participating in her 1st amendment rights or I will be punished. And who, by the way, is "we"? A councilperson represents an entire council. Is this threat just from her or the entire council? Her words imply the latter. Further, I feel that she's threatening my hard work for this City by seeking a way to cause harm to my career by way of retaliation. That's very, very concerning to me especially because she's been seeding discontent among my peers toward me, telling colleagues that I threatened her, which I didn't.

By pressuring city staff to pursue disciplinary measures against me, even a verbal reprimanding that is reportedly expunged from my record in a year, the councilmember is operating outside the parameters of an elected official and is exceeding her authority. Staff or residents should not be allowed to be targeted or threatened based off the actions of their family, their political ideology, or a councilmember's pressure to retaliate against them. The fact that she even approached me with hostility is already a problem but to deflect from that inappropriate incident to double down and imply that I did anything to threaten her - which I didn't - is distracting from her own violation further creating a hostile work environment. Her assertions are potential libelous.

Frankly, I believe that the councilmember should be censured from speaking to staff. Not only did she harass me, I've had to listen to her scream through the office before and do not want it happen again. We deserve a healthy work environment, not a hostile one.

Thank you,

Andrew Stevens, CEM

Emergency Manager - City of Sammamish

astevens@sammamish.us

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