

There were allegations made against several of our employees and below you will find a summary of the investigation that was completed by the Ohio Auditor's Special Investigation Unit.

Good evening and thank you for attending tonight's Special Council Meeting. Tonight, we will be going over an investigation alleging Village of Milan employees conducting weekend chores were claiming more time and being paid in excess of the time they were actually working.

On March 1, 2023, the State Auditor's Office requested a meeting with our Solicitor, Fiscal Officer, Administrator, and me. During the meeting, we learned that a Village resident made at least 23 complaints of fraud by Village employees to the State Auditor's Fraud Hotline. These allegations were made against four Village employees and the allegations revolve around reporting on their time sheets. The complaint alleged the employees who do weekend chores were claiming more time on their time sheets than they actually worked and were therefore being paid in excess of what they were actually working. After that meeting, the field Auditors said they will take their notes from this meeting back to their supervisors to see if the Special Investigation Unit or the SIU, will perform an investigation. After the meeting, our Solicitor and Administrator contacted Erie County Sheriff Paul Sigsworth, and asked to have his office investigate these complaints. Sheriff Sigsworth contacted the SIU to request they do an investigation.

On March 3, 2023 we received a phone call from Mike Vinson, Chief Investigator with the SIU asking if he and Tiffany Ridenbaugh, Chief Forensic Officer, could come to Milan on March 6, 2023 to interview the employees and watch the process of weekend chores at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Our Solicitor, Administrator and I met with them at the office first and then we all went to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and met with the employees.

The following is a summary of the investigation performed by the SIU. The complete investigative report is a public record and can be obtained by contacting the Ohio Auditor's office.

The Ohio Auditor's Special Investigation Unit (SIU) received complaints from Tina Frederick, alleging Village of Milan Employees conducting weekend chores were claiming time and being paid in excess of what they were working. Frederick provided information she believed substantiated her claim including photographs of vehicles traveling to and from the Village of Milan Wastewater Treatment Plant and timesheets of employees she accused.

On March 6, 2023, an investigator from the SIU conducted interviews with Tina Frederick, Milan Village Mayor Pam Crosby, Milan Village Administrator Brian Rospert, Village of Milan Employees who were called out in the complaints.

The report of the SIU indicates that Frederick provided them with a notebook containing eight (8) tabs. After discussing the information contained in the notebook, the investigators determined that tabs five (5) through eight (8) related to Mary Bruno and a previous Finding for Recovery and would not be a focus of this preliminary inquiry.

The investigators then reported that Frederick had pictures of vehicles she claimed were the vehicles coming and going from the treatment plant and the time of the coming and going did not match up with the times on the employee's time slips. The camera was a motion activated camera which the investigators found from their interview with Frederick to be unreliable and created images which limited the ability to identify details. Frederick did not personally witness any of the vehicles going by. Frederick told investigators she did not know the details or time it took to complete the weekend chores.

The investigators then went to the water/wastewater treatment plant. At the investigator's request, Wastewater Superintendent Brad Simon demonstrated to the SIU what exactly the weekend chores entail so they could get an idea of the time it took to do the chores and what

would happen if they were not done. After the demonstration, each employee agreed to be interviewed by the investigators, even though the allegations, if found true, would be a high-level criminal offense.

According to the SIU investigative report, the investigators then looked at all the documents contained in the 23 complaints from Frederick, considered the interviews and the demonstration by Superintendent Simon.

After this investigation, the investigators found "(Quote)":

Based on our observations of the tasks to complete the chores and then comparing the timesheets from March 1, 2021, to current, it is apparent the employees completing the weekend chores are claiming times which would be consistent to properly complete their required duties. The allegation that the employees who complete the weekend chores are stealing time is unfounded. unquote

In closing, I want to thank our Solicitor, Administrator, and staff for assisting with this investigation. Although it is difficult for the employees and their families to have to go through these allegations, it is refreshing to learn that our employees were not fraudulently documenting unworked time on their time sheets. We value our employees and their commitment to our Village. Not only for weekend chores, but they are there for our residents in their time of need. It doesn't matter if it is an electric issue, water or wastewater issue, snow removal, brush pick up, yard waste pick up or just simply keeping our charming community clean, they are there!

Even though the SIU substantiated the complaints were unfounded, all members of council received an email from Frederick after she received the SIU report. The email stated basically that the SIU investigation was wrong and she is continuing to investigate the employees doing weekend chores.

In order to keep the Village from expending funds to respond to these types of situations and to allow our employees to do their jobs without the constant harassment, I ask that the Council consider going back to the way we paid for employees for weekend chores before COVID, as two hours of pay minimum at overtime rate, for each time they performed chores on the weekends and holidays. This will be a minimum of two hours in the morning and then again in the afternoon each day.