



LOUISVILLE EMPLOYEE SETTLES JOB COMPLAINT

A \$315,000 settlement has been issued to a Louisville public works department employee by the city. The employee claims he was retaliated against after he alleged mismanagement by the Metro Public Works officials. A whistle-blower complaint was filed by Eric Garrett against the city and metro government back in June of 2010. He claimed that he was wrongly suspended without pay after he made claims that officials were neglecting important equipment. The equipment in question was heating and air conditioning equipment that is very expensive. He said that the neglect could cost the city millions of dollars, according to his attorney, Shane Sidebottom. In April of 2010, Garrett met with administrators from the city's Internal Audit and Human Resources departments to discuss his claims that he made two months earlier on the city's ethics tip-line. Sidebottom said that Garrett was suspended for three days following that meeting for being mean to a co-worker, according to a complaint filed against him. Later in June, the suspension was extended indefinitely, which forced Sidebottom to file a whistle-blower suit in Jefferson Circuit Court on the behalf of Garrett. He felt that his client was the victim of retaliation for claiming mismanagement by the city officials. In October, the city ruled that there was not sufficient evidence to support wrongdoing by Garrett against the co-worker, which permitted him to go back to work. He could not go back to work until he underwent a psychiatric evaluation to determine if he was fit to return to the job. Garrett did not have to undergo the evaluation because Sidebottom fought against the ruling and had it rescinded. Sidebottom took issue with the evaluation because Betty Younis, a Public Works official Garrett named in the claim, consulted with the psychiatrist who was going to conduct the evaluation. Younis is the facilities management supervisor for the city. Public Works director Ted Pullen was also named by Garrett in his claim. For his suspension in October of 2010, Garrett was given back pay and reimbursed for lost benefits. Garrett has been employed by metro government since 2004 and Public Works since July 2006. Sidebottom said that Garrett is happy with the settlement of the claim. "He's anxious to get back to work and put this all behind him," Sidebottom said. Sidebottom also said that Garrett is still an employee of Public Works and has no plans for leaving the department anytime soon. A spokesman for the county attorney's office, Bill Patteson, did not elaborate as to how the \$315,000 settlement was decided on but he did say that the settlement "represents a mutually satisfactory settlement in this issue." The case would have gone to trial in February if a settlement was not reached between the two sides. "I think everybody is happy to avoid trial and move on," Sidebottom said.

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