

CITY OF NEWTON LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION INTO POLICE CHIEF



Ed Mitnick was hired by Newton to investigate allegations made by an employee against Police Chief Matthew Cummings. Mitnick worked on over 20 city-related investigations over the past 14 years, according to Human Resources Director Dolores Hamilton. Mitnick was hired the day after the city received a letter from Jeanne Sweeney Mooney. Mooney is on administrative leave after being accused of stealing money on the job. "Mr. Mitnick was available immediately, has experience with hostile work environment claims, was a former hearing officer for the Mass Commission Against Discrimination and has over 25 years of experience," Hamilton said. City officials received a letter from Mooney's attorney, John Tocci from Tocci, Goss & Lee, PC in Boston. The letter was sent on May 21 and it demands that Mooney receive damages in excess of \$600,000 along with re-instatement to her job as an administrative assistant. The letter also requests that Cummings be fired from his job. The letter was a response to the claims that Mooney stole \$660 in cash, shredded a record of payments and destroyed \$1,466 in checks. Cummings said that police filed charges against Mooney for larceny over \$250. There will be a hearing held at Framingham District Court in August to figure out if there is enough evidence to move forward with the criminal complaint against Mooney. On September 26, 2011, Mooney was placed on paid administrative leave. Auditors from Melanson Heath and Company were hired by the city in October of 2011 and were paid \$4,500, according to Hamilton. Retired State Police Lt. Ed Johnson was hired for \$9,000 by the city as well. "Each was hired for their expertise. We researched and checked references. Both had excellent references," Hamilton said. Hamilton also said that money was determined to be missing by Melanson Heath and Company. It was not announced if Johnson determined if a crime was committed or not. On the other hand, the letter from Tocci to the city said that Johnson said there was probable cause to think Mooney committed a crime. Johnson reportedly told Mooney she would not have charges filed against her by the city if she resigned, according to the letter from Tocci. Mooney claimed in the letter that Cummings created a hostile working environment. Mitnick is being paid \$2,400 for the investigation. Hamilton said Mitnick has worked on cases for Newton involving allegations of gender discrimination, sexual harassment, race discrimination, employee performance and hostile work environment. Mitnick has been paid over \$80,000 for his investigations by the city and for training programs he has run. Even though Mooney is on paid leave, Cummings is not on leave even though he is being investigated by Mitnick. "Administrative leave is determined on a case by case basis," Hamilton said. "I rely on the selection process that's put in place by the HR Department to ensure the city has a qualified investigator on the case," Newton Mayor Setti Warren said. "I will review his report when it's done and make a determination around the completeness of that report and what action and steps need to be taken from that point on."