



PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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City of Bastrop addresses discrimination concerns....

(Bastrop County, TX) – At the Tuesday, April 24th City Council meeting, city staff member Kay Revetta addressed City Council, community members, the media and city staff during Citizen Comments complaining of the environment at city hall and discrimination under the City’s current administration. It was apparent that her claims stem from the fact that her son, Ricky Revetta, had been terminated for cause from the City of Bastrop. According to Human Resource Director Tanya Cantrell, “The Human Resource department has no founded complaints or claims of discrimination on file from any current or past city employee during the last eighteen years,” that being the period that Cantrell has been employed by the City of Bastrop in this capacity. No hostile or toxic work environment or discrimination claims have been filed during the tenure of City Manager Humble. Current personnel policy states: *“There shall be no discrimination against any person in job structuring, recruitment, examination, selection, appointment, placement, training, upward mobility, scheduling, discipline or any other aspect of personnel administration based upon race, age, religion, color, national origin, sex, political affiliation or belief, familial status, disability or any other category added by the Federal government or State law in the future. Discrimination on the basis of age, sex, or disability is prohibited except where specific age, sex, or physical requirements constitute a bona fide occupational qualification necessary to proper and efficient administration.”*

City Manager Lynda Humble is well known for creating a culture of leadership, hard work, transparency, accountability and two-way communication to the public in all of her municipal government roles. Nonetheless, it is to be expected that in the public arena some disgruntled current or former employees will make public their personal grievances. The Bastrop City Council, who hired Mrs. Humble in the Spring of 2017, was aware of the difficult decisions that she was entrusted to make in the past, which Mrs. Humble considered to be in the best interest of the City. She was hired to represent and

serve the Citizens of Bastrop and work towards creating a fiscally sustainable and trusted local government. The current City Council understands the challenges that Mrs. Humble was hired to address and supports her vision for the organization. "I have been charged by the city council with a mission, vision, focus areas, annual work plan and instructed to carry out Comprehensive Plan 2036, these responsibilities are not taken lightly," said Humble. "I am tough but fair, all of our directors and staff should be focused on providing the best level of service to our customers, participate in our many challenges, and try and offer up creative solutions."

City Attorney Alan Bojorquez would not allow Mrs. Revetta to air a video clip during Citizen Comments per city policy as it was not connected to a current agenda item. Furthermore, it was not standard city custom or practice to allow just anyone to upload presentations for public viewing unrelated to a public discussion item. It has come to light that this video was included in a broader context of a PowerPoint presentation intended to improve customer service by City Employees during a Texas Friendly Hospitality Training session in September 2016, prior to the hiring of City Manager Lynda Humble. The training, entitled 'Texas Friendly Hospitality – On the Job for Our Community' was prepared by Sarah O'Brien, Hospitality & Downtown Director. O'Brien has been a Texas Friendly Hospitality Instructor since 2007, and has given versions of this presentation dozens of times across Texas to various municipal, downtown, and tourism agencies. The video has neither been utilized nor approved by the current administration. While to some people the video may have some comic value or instructional relevance, its ethnic humor is considered inappropriate by the current administration. In the future, such videos will be considered culturally insensitive, and thus ineligible for use as in-house training for city staff. "On behalf of myself and the City of Bastrop I would like to deeply apologize to any city employee who was offended by the video." said Hospitality & Downtown Director Sarah O'Brien. The office of the City Manager also extends its regrets and apologies on behalf of the City of Bastrop. "It is unfortunate that all complaints, concerns or grievances stemming from viewing the 2016 video were not brought forward at that time so that they could have been investigated and dealt with in the proper setting with the proper context," said Humble. The City of Bastrop will not be taking any action today regarding a training event that occurred 1 ½ years ago. All City employees are reminded to assert any grievances in a timely manner in accordance with the Personnel Policies Manual.

"While the goal of the workshop was indeed serious, O'Brien at times communicated her message with humorous, though instructive, materials. Such was a video shown on the Council Chamber's large screen which introduced a female worker at the front counter of a (fast food) restaurant. It garnered

hearty laughs with her outrageous manners with customers – definitely not a way to interact with clients.” Terry Haggerty, contributing writer for the City of Bastrop and The Bastrop Advertiser wrote after attending the training session. “Had I had any idea that the content of this video would be found offensive by any class participants, I would have addressed those concerns immediately,” said O’Brien. The 2007 Mad TV Video Parody will not be used in any future training presentations, nor has Ms. O’Brien hosted Texas Friendly Hospitality Training in Bastrop since that time. The City of Bastrop, BEDC, and Visit Bastrop have been working on creating a comprehensive Bastrop Friendly Training Program focusing on customer service and hospitality. The program will provide online modules for small businesses and tourism partners to enhance our tourism efforts and will launch later this year

The Mission of the City of Bastrop is to continuously strive to provide efficient and proactive services that enhance our quality of life and achieve our vision. For more information on the City of Bastrop please visit us online at www.cityofbastrop.org, follow us on social media via Instagram, Facebook or Twitter. Residents can also tune in to BTXN TV via Spectrum Channel 10 and AT&T U-verse Channel 99 or watch online at www.btxn.tv .