

King City Residents,

The accompanying letter was sent by mail to agencies and select community members. The letter was received on March 21<sup>st</sup> and it is unknown to what level it has been distributed throughout our community.

At this point, it's unknown what steps are being taken to investigate the allegations being made. The city held an Executive Session on April 5<sup>th</sup> that was closed to the public citing confidentiality and attorney client privilege. It is assumed the meeting was held to discuss the allegations made in this letter.

Those of us that have had a chance to review the letter feel it necessary that everyone in King City have that same opportunity. Anyone that pays taxes, relies on police protection to be there when we need it, expects the highest level of integrity from city leadership, and counts on proper oversight to insure accountability and transparency, will more than likely find these allegations troubling.

As a community, we should demand that those remaining on the city council be transparent and address each allegation openly and honestly by conducting an investigation by a third party or by requesting assistance from an outside agency.

Any judgment should be withheld until an investigation is complete. It is extremely important that the community monitor the steps being taken to make sure this situation is dealt with appropriately.

Tell them how you feel and ask what's being done. This is **YOUR** city.

Mayor Thompson  
sthompson@ci.king-city.or.us

Councilor Manelis  
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Councilor Tysoe  
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Four Council positions remain open and will be filled soon. For an application or other ways to participate in city government go to **unitekingcity.org or ci.king-city.or.us**

## **King City Corruption**

### **The City of King City is Wasting Your Tax Dollars and Jeopardizing Your Safety**

Due to recent events and turmoil in King City, the following incidents and ongoing abuses at city hall need to be brought to light and doing so is long overdue. The information provided in these pages is done so anonymously out of concern for personal and professional retaliation.

#### **King City Management**

King City Manager Mike Weston, by city charter, is the administrative head of the city government and is responsible to the council for the management of all city affairs placed in the manager's charge by the charter. The city manager serves at the pleasure of the city council and the council provides oversight. Both the council and the city manager have failed to properly manage and provide oversight on behalf of the citizens of King City. The King City Manager and King City Council have failed to properly manage the city and should be held accountable.

Mike Weston has created a culture at city hall that has permeated into the police department that compromises public safety, safety of its officers, and has resulted in waste and abuse of publicly funded resources provided by the community. It doesn't take long before newly hired officers begin to ask questions of their fellow employees regarding the conduct of the city manager, police chief and police lieutenant. Friendships have been forged amongst these three city leaders that has allowed and reinforced negligent behavior. This has left no avenue for the rank and file to report abuses within the department. This culture has resulted in patrol officers becoming uncomfortable with the operation and unsupported by the department. As a result, the King City Police Department has difficulty retaining qualified officers. It's not long before new officers begin seeking out other employment opportunities. The Police Chief and Police Lieutenant have failed to serve the community in accordance with their oath of office and should be held accountable.

#### **History**

Back in 2017, before former Police Chief Chuck Fessler retired, the King City Police Department operated with Chief Fessler as the only police administrator along with a supervising sergeant and five patrol officers. King City had almost full-time police coverage as well as officer shift overlap. Overlapping shifts are more beneficial for officer safety and quality of service for citizens. However, Chief Fessler's retirement in 2018 has proved to be a devastating blow to King City's quality of service, fiscal responsibility, and overall transparency to the public.

Fast forward to 2021 and the city of King City had devolved down to two police administrators in Chief Happala and Lieutenant Sigler, and only two full time sworn police officers assigned to working the road. Aside from the two police administrators, every other police officer had either left the force for other departments or had at least seriously explored the option. During this time, Mike Weston, the Chief and Lieutenant, all received exorbitant salaries and end of year bonuses.

## **Promotions**

Ernie Happala was promoted to Chief of the King City Police Department in 2018 after Chief Fessler's retirement, and at that time, was the sole police administrator. Shortly after Happala's promotion, Sigler was swiftly promoted by Mike Weston from officer to sergeant to lieutenant within a span of around six months. In small police departments like King City, with only 4 full-time patrol officers, lieutenant positions are rare, with none existing in King City until Happala assumed the chief role and Sigler was promoted to sergeant. In a small department, the job duties of a sergeant and a lieutenant are virtually identical. This rapid promotion directly benefits Sigler without significant additional responsibilities. It also raises concerns about fiscal responsibility, as promoting him from sergeant to lieutenant entails higher pay without clear justification. Unlike lieutenants, sergeants are subject to pay raises based on collective bargaining agreements, limiting financial flexibility.

The promotion granted Sigler gave him the same status as Happala and Weston, providing him with similar privileges. However, this came at the cost of King City taxpayers, without any extra benefit for the increased salary he receives. No need for a lieutenant unless you have more staff to supervise like a sergeant. Why do you need a gap in rank? A sergeant outranks an officer. Law enforcement from all over the county have often questioned why it was necessary for such a small police department to have two highly paid administrators. The promotion took away a patrol officer and as a result of that loss, traffic complaints around the city continued to get called in with fewer full time patrol officers available to respond to them.

## **The Inner Circle**

Happala and Sigler consistently prioritize their own needs. They wield significant influence over the allocation of equipment for police officers, often resulting in outdated technology and antiquated equipment. Check what they have available to them vs what the officers have. Ask why they need it in the first place. They rarely take calls for service, if ever.

Despite frequently citing budget constraints of a small department, they readily dispense additional perks such as extra pay, overtime, time off, improved equipment, and specialized training to those in their favor, much like Officer Arrigoni.

In the eyes of Happala and Sigler, King City operates as their domain, funded by taxpayers. For those aligned with them, it's considered a pleasant work environment; however, for those who are not, departure is common, as evidenced by the high turnover rate.

They primarily supervise via email, particularly Sigler, during the 2-4 days they are in the office each week. An audit would reveal a cluster of emails from Sigler in the morning hours the days he comes into King City and a random email now and again on the days and times he's not in King City. Both the Chief and Lieutenant are scheduled the same days, Monday through Thursday, without staggering, which is supposed to add value to the department.

Inquire with any officer, present or former, whether they're fresh off FTEP or several years into their career, about the frequency of Sigler or Happala visiting after hours to check in or assess their performance during call responses. In a department the size of King City, it's essential that every sworn employee not only remains active in the field but also has visibility into the skills possessed by their officers. Particularly, in the case of Sigler, Officer Arrigoni's input serves as the criterion for evaluating her colleagues' capabilities. This reliance on her perspective could be limiting and potentially biased.

Arrigoni often directs her peers on how King City policies or situations should be handled, often in favor of her preferred approach, with continuous consultation with Sigler. This dynamic, where directives don't directly come from Sigler, seems ideal for both Sigler and Arrigoni.

If you're in Sigler's favor, as Officer Arrigoni is, you're bestowed with numerous specialty titles but carry minimal responsibility. Arrigoni operates at her own pace, enjoying extra pay and time off whenever Sigler deems it appropriate. Although Sigler argues that she's adequately compensated for her work, Arrigoni essentially sets her own schedule, often avoiding calls for service she finds inconvenient.

Officer Arrigoni will readily chastise her peers as Sigler allows her the wide berth she enjoys. She's abrasive, controlling and causes dissension amongst virtually every officer she has come in contact with at King city.

Essentially, every officer who has served in King City over the past 5 to 8 years will mention how challenging it is to work with Arrigoni. Many have approached Sigler with accounts ranging from inappropriate, condescending, and other concerning behavior. Sigler has been heard stating that she harbors animosity towards people, deflecting blame onto others while attributing her behavior to various issues. The consistent factor among these officers is Arrigoni. Sigler consistently comes to her defense on every occasion.

A police officer's job is inherently challenging, but when you factor in Sigler's influence over Arrigoni, treating her every word about fellow officers as absolute truth, the situation becomes even more taxing. This dynamic leads to moral dilemmas, low pay, and minimal supervision, compounding at times the already overwhelming workload beyond reasonable limits

### **Chet Lemon**

Chet Lemon was a Tualatin Police Department School Resource Officer. Lemon was indicted for sexual misconduct crimes that were alleged to have occurred in 2018 and 2019. Lemon was hired by King City in December of 2020 but was never sworn in as an officer. It was well known amongst the local police departments that Lemon and Lieutenant Brian Sigler were friends and their kids played on local sports teams. There is no question why Lemon was given the sergeant position at King City so easily with the backing of Lieutenant Sigler. Not only were the police administration and Mike Weston behind the hiring of Lemon, but they also instructed the city to keep Lemon on the payroll to the tune of an unverified figure of \$83,720.39. Mike Weston told KOIN 6 News that at no time during Lemon's hiring process in 2020 was the King City Police Department made aware of any potential allegations. Most law enforcement find it hard to believe that the Tualatin Police Department heads did not advise the King City Police Department of an already ongoing investigation into Lemon. KOIN 6 News also reported that the King City Police Department said Lemon was never employed as a sworn King City police officer. Lemon was however placed on administrative leave prior to being sworn in. The question remains why Chet Lemon was allowed to be on administrative leave and be paid while the police department remained understaffed.

There was talk within law enforcement circles regarding a phone call between Tualatin Chief of Police Bill Steele (retired) and Sherwood Chief of Police Jeff Groth (retired). According to the story, Chief Groth inquired whether Tualatin had informed King City about Lemon's investigation status during Lemon's application process for sergeant in King city. Chief Steele reportedly told Chief Groth that he had personally informed Chief Happala about Lemon's investigation.

During the Chet Lemon debacle, a King City officer filed a complaint with the US Department of Labor (DOL) for a violation of the Uniformed Services Employment and Re-employment Rights Act (USERRA) and with the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI) for violating the state's equivalent. He had been passed over for promotion due to his absence from the police department while serving the U.S. Military during reservist duty. Instead of this officer receiving a fair shot at promotion, public records indicate that the King City Police Department Sergeant position was given to Chet Lemon. Neither DOL or BOLI sustained his complaint and he left the King City Police Department in November 2021.

### **Safety Levy**

In November 2019, the 5 year King City Police and Public Safety Local Option Levy was approved by King City residents. This levy was brought to the voters in order to allow the King City Police Department to: Maintain police services at their current level, increase supervision, retain experienced officers, provide officer training, and continue participation in the Washington County-wide PPDS Records System. For the first fiscal year 2020-21, the levy brought in \$348,237. Despite King City residents paying more in taxes in order to benefit their police department, the opposite has happened with King City experiencing a decrease in police services. King City has been unable to retain experienced officers, those leaving citing lack of respect by police administration. Based on public records, King City police officers receive the minimal required training to stay current. The only increase in terms of supervision was a big increase in King City administration salaries which were significantly lower prior to the levy passing. Basic equipment provided by other agencies are not provided in King City and are essential tools for officer safety and efficiency. The Chief and Lieutenant are assigned the newest vehicles, primarily driving them between work and home, while the patrol officers are assigned the older vehicles for the primary work of the department.

### **City Manager's Past Seems Familiar**

The King City city council and Mike Weston have consistently gone down fiscally irresponsible paths. It isn't much of a surprise though, given Mike Weston's past history of mismanagement. All one needs to do is Google "Mike Weston Daily Astorian" to review his sour parting of ways from his leadership role with the Port of Astoria involving lawsuits, poor employee treatment, and alleged abuse of power. One article reports that an independent review of allegations against Mike Weston not only sustained them, but also indicated that Mike Weston was untruthful to the independent commission as well as engaged in deceptive contract modifications. As an example of Mike Weston's subtle deception tactics, he compared his "low" salary citing comparisons to county level director positions and Chief Happala's salary to the much larger Tigard and Tualatin Chief of Police positions. A recent League of Oregon City's salary comparison for like sized city's would suggest they are significantly over paid. In regards to contract negotiations, Mike Weston opposed King City employees' desire for a fair contract which resulted in very small raises that paled in comparison to the percentage increase given to the three administrators in the city after the levy passed.

City Manager Mike Weston (2020 Salary - \$122,500) (2024 Salary - \$154,362)

Chief Ernie Happala (2020 Salary - \$102,000) (2024 Salary - \$128,529.45)

Lieutenant Brian Sigler (2020 Salary - \$90,000) (2024 Salary - \$113,413.60)

Mike Weston is also currently embattled with many King City residents who recently recalled four King City city councilors including the Mayor due to leadership and decision making issues. These same citizens have criticized Mike Weston for deception and having too much control over the city council. He was also involved with attempting to stop the recall election which ended up in court when an order from the Secretary of State was not followed.

## **Dereliction of Duty**

King City police officers have stated that they absolutely enjoy working in the city and serving the citizens in the community. However, the King City Police Department has shed its officers at an alarming rate due to the disrespectful treatment from Chief Happala and Lieutenant Sigler and their lack of willingness to lead by example. According to public records, there have been multiple occasions when Chief Happala and Lieutenant Sigler have been derelict in their duties by not going to calls for service within King City and have allowed outside agencies to handle the calls until a King City patrol officer came on duty. According to public records, Chief Happala and Lieutenant Sigler have failed to respond to a multitude of calls for service since 2020 while they were scheduled to be on duty at the time of the call. There have also been occasions where Chief Happala and Lieutenant Sigler failed to go to calls in the city altogether either while on duty or when they should have been on duty. The most alarming of these are...

A CPR call in which a young female King City resident ended up deceased.

A found gun call by a King City resident outside their residence

A CPR call in which a resident in King City ended up deceased

A welfare check of an elderly King City female walking out in the street

Law enforcement officers around the area have noticed and have commented that Lieutenant Sigler does not care if King City calls for service get sent out to the Washington County Sheriff's Office due to no King City officer being available to respond. Lieutenant Sigler accepts his full salary and is able to schedule himself to work far less than 40 hour work weeks. To compensate, he schedules the patrol officers under his command to work overtime.

For years now, it has been very common for all three King City administrators to be out of the building by early afternoon, with Lieutenant Sigler leaving work early, which in turn leaves no overlapping coverage during the midday hours. This takes a working King City sworn officer away from the citizens and puts a potential burden of protection on the nearby outside agencies that are oftentimes busy handling their own calls for service. This is a dangerous practice not only for the officers on duty but for the citizens that expect a rapid response from their own police department. King City citizens are not getting what they paid for and in fact, are paying more as outside agencies charge King City when responding to King City calls. Police administration has cited that they are busy in meetings or phone calls as a reason for not being in the city working. These claims routinely have no legitimate basis, transparency or accountability. During the height of the 2020 pandemic, Chief Happala and Lieutenant Sigler alternated weeks when they would come into work. When they did come in for "their week", they would be in the office half days. People close to the situation calculated that Chief Happala and Lieutenant Sigler worked about 40 hours a month, not a week, during this time. The conduct of these two individuals over the years proves, on a daily basis, that King City does not need two police administrators.

Public records show Lieutenant Sigler regularly logging in late and then logging out early from the time period of 2020-2022 without any reduction in pay. These were large amounts of missed time periods that left King City unmanned for hours.

In one of the more blatant displays of arrogance and disrespect for the city of King City, Mike Weston and Lieutenant Sigler find time multiple days a week to go to Planet Fitness

midmorning and work out. There is no city fitness program that allows for this during working hours. Other employees of the city are expected to put in a full day and are not given such latitude. Mike Weston and Lieutenant Sigler will leave City Hall dressed in shorts and sweatshirts for over an hour and stroll back in the same way, and then shower at city hall taking even more time away from their duties. They do not add time onto their work day when they do this as they still leave by early or mid-afternoon which is their standard practice. Lieutenant Sigler, out of uniform at Planet Fitness, is a dangerous practice as it routinely leaves the citizens and fellow police officers vulnerable when he is unavailable to be dispatched to a serious call, since there is no one on his end of the radio to answer.

### **Financial Benefit Concerns**

Lieutenant Sigler failed to submit accrued time-off vacation days for times when he was out of state with his family on vacations. Lieutenant Sigler also allows Officer Arrigoni to commit similar unethical practices. Public records show that Officer Arrigoni missed multiple days of work without claiming the required amount of time-off in past years.

Holiday bonuses were paid in 2019 and 2020 to ten city employees despite no provisions in city employment contracts for bonuses. The city charter states the compensation and benefits for the services of the city manager shall be fixed and determined by resolution of the city council. The 2019 bonus total was \$18,250 and in 2020 was \$19,250. Mike Weston received \$5,000 in each of the two years or about 27% of the total. Holiday bonuses are not a customary practice for government entities and are certainly not for police departments in the area.

During the 01/08/24 special city council meeting, Mike Weston, Chief Happala, and Lieutenant Sigler were able to negotiate a no cause termination agreement with the city council that provides a one year severance. The reason for the amendment was stated by Mayor Fender as a guardrail for the anticipated recall, was stated as not in the best interest of the city, was not part of a scheduled contract negotiation, the public was not allowed to object to this unprecedented measure, and was unanimously approved by the council.

### **Morale**

In addition to the fiscal mismanagement and dereliction of their duty, the King City administration has created an atmosphere of malice and distrust within city hall. The administrators disparage their employees behind their backs. Lieutenant Sigler sends out berating emails and declares "every day is a job interview" even though every employee at City Hall has a job. The emails he sends are intimidating and they promote a sense of insecurity for the hard-working employees of the city. Lieutenant Sigler dangles future promotions in front of police officers in order to get them to sign up for the force or to stick around. The problem with offering that incentive is, there are no promotions available. Manipulation and scare tactics against employees are common practices by the administration.

### **What Needs to Happen**

The citizens of King City deserve better, as do the honest, hard-working officers and other employee both present and those who have left. King City residents, it's time to reclaim your city. The operational flow of any city begins with its citizens, then moves to the city council, the city manager, and so forth. Make certain every current employee of King City is deposed under oath. You will likely uncover important information and quite possibly more details. Deposing every current and former police officer of King City under oath is essential, as police officers swear to a code of ethics.

Initiate a forensic audit conducted by a reputable third-party to scrutinize the city's finances. Question why your city lacks round-the-clock police coverage from your own department and why there isn't 24/7 supervision of officers with an on-duty supervisor or 2 officers at all times.

Demand transparency regarding the allocation of funds for the approved police levees, which could have potentially funded the hiring of additional officers. Investigate the whereabouts of the funds designated for the sergeant position intended for Lemon. By reallocating resources from the current lieutenant to sergeant and tracing the funds allocated for Lemon's hiring, it becomes evident that there was enough funding to appoint two sergeants in addition to the chief with no lieutenant position.

Examine the police budget to ensure every penny is utilized for city policing and not redirected to the general fund for discretionary spending. Query why the chief and lieutenant have not pursued law enforcement grants, both state and federal, especially considering your city's eligibility and need. Explore whether the perceived reluctance to apply for grants stems from concerns about the accompanying oversight, despite assertions of operating on a tight budget. Given King City's optimal size for grant consideration, maximizing opportunities for law enforcement funding should be a priority. If they claim to have applied for law enforcement grants, insist on reviewing the applications to understand their quality. Evaluate whether they were meticulously crafted to be competitive or hastily assembled without attention to detail, as crafting competitive grant proposals requires significant time and effort.

Why isn't the King City Police Department pursuing accreditation or engaging in self-assessment? Accreditation is a common goal among law enforcement agencies in Oregon, regardless of size.

Audit in detail the necessary, timesheets and attendance/leave records for the last several years. See what they claim they have worked versus how much time they really worked. Speak to employees in their depositions to the attendance and actual hours at King City of certain employees, during their assigned work day.

City manager Mike Weston has allowed the city to become inefficient and for those in charge to use their positions to take liberties for their own personal benefit. The King City Council has been absent in their oversight by not recognizing the very basic signs that the city was being mismanaged and not asking the right questions. The culture of your city and its employees needs to be set by you. It can and will be a great city to live in once you take it back and hold those in charge accountable.

CC: DPSST

Oregon State Police  
Washington County District Attorney  
Oregon Department of Justice  
United States Attorney's Office  
Oregon Government Ethics Commission  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Dan Thenell, FOP  
Councilor Shawna Thompson  
Councilor Marc Manelis  
Councilor Jan Tysoe  
Select members of the community

Portland Tribune  
The Oregonian  
Willamette Week  
Tigard Life  
KGW News  
KOIN 6 TV  
KATU Channel 2  
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