

News List

Wauwatosa Common Council Approves Separation Agreement with Officer Joseph Mensah

Joseph Mensah is resigning from employment effective November 30, 2020

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The Wauwatosa Common Council entered into a separation agreement on November 17, 2020, between Joseph Mensah, the Wauwatosa Peace Officer's Association, and the City of Wauwatosa. Joseph Mensah is a police officer with the Wauwatosa Police Department.

As part of this agreement, Joseph Mensah is resigning from employment with the City of Wauwatosa effective November 30, 2020. The city has asked the Police and Fire Commission to meet as soon as practical to dismiss the charges pending against Officer Mensah as he will no longer be an employee of the City of Wauwatosa.

Mayor McBride states, "Now is the time for all of us to come together and heal. We've made substantial progress during 2020, and in the coming year we'll continue to focus on positive change for our community. As before, I'm committed to working with the Common Council, the city's Equity and Inclusion Commission, and members of the public to make that happen."

Over the past several months, Wauwatosa has taken several steps towards creating more equity, including:

- Training for city employees on implicit bias, Milwaukee's history and racial disparities, and for supervisors on ways to ensure a more equitable workplace, as well as stopping implicit biases from impacting hiring decisions.
- Adopting the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC)'s pledge to "Make Milwaukee a Region of Choice." As part of this pledge, the city is to increase diverse management by 25% and diverse employment by 15% by 2025. Wauwatosa was the first municipality to join this effort.
- Banning chokeholds and carotid restraints on August 4, 2020.
- Posting police policies on the city's website to enhance transparency.
- Creating an online complaint and commendation form for members of the public to submit comment about the Police Department without reporting to the Police Department building to do so.
- Purchasing body-worn cameras for the Wauwatosa Police Department.
- Hosting three community conversations in partnership with the Zeidler Group to hear from community stakeholders about how to build greater equity in Wauwatosa.
- Dedicating a focus area to the next Wauwatosa strategic plan about equity.

The City of Wauwatosa is committed to continuing this important equity work into the future as described by Mayor McBride. The next step is a meeting by the Wauwatosa Committee of the Whole on December 15, 2020 to begin an anticipated three month discussion on the equity focus in the next strategic plan.

Questions

Q: Will there be an emergency declaration or curfew with this announcement?

A: There is not an emergency declaration or curfew planned at this time.

Q: Will the National Guard be in Wauwatosa again this evening?

A:No, there has been no request for mutual aid assistance.

Q: Why is the Common Council voting on this if it relates to an employment matter?

A: This is being voted on by the Council in regards to the financial impact of the separation agreement and to avoid future litigation.

[Return to full list >>](#)