



CITY OF ATLANTA

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ANDRE DICKENS
MAYOR

May 16, 2024

Ms. Shannon Manigault, OIG
City of Atlanta
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Ms. Manigault,

In response to your letter dated May 9, 2024, please know that one of the pillars of Mayor Andre Dickens's administration is effective, efficient, and ethical government. We take allegations of wrongdoing very seriously, especially if it involves a leader of the organization.

We have reviewed the report regarding allegations that Commissioner Tarlesha Smith abused the power of her position regarding her daughter's employment, retaliated against her daughter's supervisor, and directed the personnel-related activities of another agency to benefit her immediate family member. Based on the initial review, we know that a conflict of interest was created when personnel matters involving her relative were not escalated to the Mayor's Office or City Law for resolution and to prevent even the appearance of impropriety.

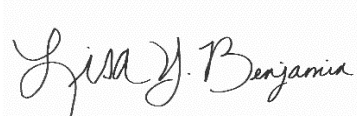
We have assigned the matter to City Law for an independent investigation. As your report indicated, there were several employees that you were unable to interview, and we want to ensure we have a comprehensive review of the facts. We have placed Commissioner Tarlesha Smith on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation and additional actions for other employees may be forthcoming.

Immediately, we requested that City Law develop recommendations and an updated citywide policy related to immediate family members to ensure there is no conflict of interest in the execution of duties. To the extent that the organization's authority extends beyond their department, specifically for those entities that provide internal services such as the Department of Human Resources we are also identifying an escalation process for matters involving related parties.

We believe that the OIG and other compliance organizations should conduct investigations in partnership with the administration to ensure the safeguarding of records. This administration has been in discussions with you on the process to access information that allows for timely response and safeguards those records in accordance with the law and best practices.

We appreciate your partnership in ensuring that the city maintains strong integrity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa Y. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light beige background behind it.

Lisa Y. Benjamin
Chief Operating Officer

C: Honorable Mayor Andre Dickens
Odie Donald, Chief of Staff
Patrise Perkins Hooker, City Attorney
Raines Carter, Solicitor
LaChandra Burks, Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Jason Ingram, Deputy Chief Operating Officer