CITY OF ATLANTA

ANDRE DICKENS
MAYOR

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LACHANDRA BURKS
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

July 25, 2024

Dear Ms. Shannon K. Manigault, Inspector General:

Re: Termination of Commissioner Tarlesha Smith

One of the pillars of Mayor Andre Dickens's administration is effective, efficient, and ethical government; and we take allegations of wrongdoing very seriously, especially if it involves a leader of the organization.

On May 9, 2024, the Office of Inspector General (OIG) issued a report regarding allegations that City of Atlanta Department of Human Resources (DHR) 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. Thereafter, we concluded that a conflict of interest was created when personnel matters involving her relative were not escalated to the Mayor's Office or the City of Atlanta Department of Law for resolution. As the OIG may only make recommendations concerning disciplinary actions to be taken against an employee of the City, and as the OIG itself is the subject of DHR investigation(s) dating back to 2023, the Administration assigned the matter to the Department of Law for an independent investigation to ensure a comprehensive review of the facts and to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest. Pending the outcome of the investigation, Commissioner Smith was placed on administrative leave.

The Department of Law has concluded its independent investigation into the allegations raised in the May 2024 OIG report. The Law investigation led to the determination that Commissioner Smith engaged in misconduct, including having abused her power by encouraging: 1) preferential treatment for her daughter, in the hiring and execution of her duties as Compliance Analyst in the City of Atlanta Office of the City Solicitor, and 2) subsequent adverse action against her daughter's direct supervisor Office of City Solicitor Director Jennifer Johnson.

Accordingly, Commissioner Smith's employment with the City of Atlanta has been terminated effective immediately. Mr. Calvin Blackburn, Esq. will serve as Interim Human Resources Commissioner while a national search is conducted to find a permanent replacement.

Sincerely,

LaChandra Burks
Chief Operating Officer