

**OFFICIAL MINUTES**  
**COMMISSION MEETING OF THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK, GEORGIA**  
**CALLED MEETING**  
**1:00 P. M., May 18, 1993**

**PRESENT:** His Honor Mayor Homer L. Wilson, Commissioners Otis Herrington, Roosevelt Lawrence, and Doris A. Davis and Rev. G. E. Darrisaw.

**INVOCATION:** The invocation was given by Mark Mitchell, City Manager.

Mayor Wilson announced that this meeting was called to hold on appeals hearing for Corporal Anne Johnson.

The City Manager stated that the hearing today stems from due process hearings that were requested by Corporal Anne Johnson to appeal the decisions of Chief Sidoran and the City Manager.

At the time of the hearing with the City Manager on April 16, Corporal Johnson and Chief Sidoran discussed an incident that occurred on March 28, 1993. The City Manager submitted a copy of the report that was filed by Corporal Johnson which indicated that the Patrol Car she was driving while on duty was damaged by some unknown persons while she was out of the car checking a follow-up on a previous case at 1804 Lee Street. In the report Corporal Johnson and a witness heard something like a shattering glass and heard someone running north on Lee Street and found the windshield had been broken with an unknown object. The City Manager stated that further investigations by the Police Department showed that the damage to the Police car actually occurred as a result of Corporal Johnson striking a barricade in the road with the car while on patrol traveling down Stonewall and P Street. Police Officers handled the investigations and interviewed witnesses who was present at the scene. Based on the information discovered by the investigation Police Captain Edna Johnson, who is Field Services Commander and is in charge of the Patrol Division recommended to Major T. C. Cowan, Captain Johnson's immediate Supervisor to terminate or move Corporal Johnson to a position where she no longer operates a vehicle. The City Manager submitted a copy of the memo sent to Major Cowan from Captain Johnson. The City Manager stated that based on the recommendation from Captain Johnson, Chief Sidoran set up an informal disciplinary hearing for termination in accordance with the Personal Policy since there were no other vacancies in the Police Department. Corporal Johnson was provided with the appropriate dates for the hearings on forms provided by the City Manager's office.

During the hearing Corporal Johnson admitted to the incident that occurred as it was presented from the Police Department's Investigation. Corporal Johnson discussed her personal problems and the impact these problems had on her decision making ability. After carefully considering all the information that was presented the City Manager recommended to demote Corporal Johnson rather than to uphold the recommended termination. He recommended that Corporal Johnson be transferred from the Police Department to the Recreation Department where a job vacancy existed. The City Manager further stated that the decision was made because the facts of the incident was not disputed and Corporal Johnson's own admission that her judgement was impaired by events in her life. He stressed that he did not feel that he could allow an officer whose decision making process has been impaired to the point of filing a false report and recruiting an accomplice to back up her story to continue to serve in a law enforcement capacity in this City. The City Manager indicated that there were three violations of Section 10.2 in the Personnel Policy.

**Causes for reprimand, suspension, demotion or dismissal:**

An employee may be reprimanded, suspended, demoted or dismissed for the following reasons:

- (2) Violation of any lawful official regulation or order, or failure to obey any proper direction given or made by a superior.
- (4) Falsification of any information required by the City.
- (5) Negligence or carelessness resulting in damage to City property and equipment.

The City Manager pointed out that anyone of these three as the Policy sets out can be reasons for reprimands, demotion, suspension or dismissal.

The City Manager added that in line of Corporal Johnson's ten years of service he did feel that it was reasonable to place her in a position that is less stressful and allows her to retain her position in the City Retirement Plan as well as other City Benefits. He stated that this is what led him not to uphold the termination, but rather go with the demotion and transfer, and he would like to stand by his decision.

Chief Sidoran stated that he had a list of disciplinary actions over the last seven years which supports this kind of action taken by Corporal Johnson on that evening, and Corporal Johnson is fully aware of these things.

Corporal Johnson stated that what the City Manager said is true facts and she admitted to what happened, pointing out that she was wrong. Corporal Johnson next stated that she had something to offer the Police Department and felt like her judgement was not so impaired that it could not be rectified. She admitted her problems and asked for help so she could be productive and hold on to her Police Officer's Certification.

Commissioner Darrisaw asked Corporal Johnson did she refuse the offer recommended by the City Manager to be transferred to the Recreation Department. Corporal Johnson stated that she appreciated the offer, and asked to remain in Law Enforcement because the other job would cut her pay in half and her responsibilities could not be met working at the Recreation Department. Commissioner Darrisaw next asked Corporal Johnson did she have an opportunity to read the letter from Captain Johnson. Corporal Johnson stated that she did not know anything about the letter and it was a total shock to her. Commissioner Darrisaw asked Corporal Johnson was there any other information that was submitted today that she did not have a copy of and was not made aware of. Corporal Johnson stated that she was not sure. Commissioner Darrisaw asked Corporal Johnson to take a few minutes and read the letter that was written by Captain Johnson. Corporal Johnson read the letter and replied that the counseling took place a couple of years ago for another disciplinary action and she did not know why she was told to take the training at that time.

Commissioner Darrisaw asked Corporal Johnson if she indicated in her letter to Chief Sidoran that she did need counseling. Corporal Johnson agreed. Commissioner Darrisaw asked if the counseling that she received before was not in reference to the same kind of problems. Corporal Johnson agreed and stated that the problems she had before was because of her mother's illness. Commissioner Darrisaw asked Corporal Johnson if she admitted in her letter that she has problems and is asking for help, but admits that she is guilty and is requesting some consideration. Corporal Johnson agreed.

Commissioner Herrington asked Chief Sidoran when did he actually detect a problem with Corporal Johnson. Chief Sidoran explained that there has been a problem with Corporal Johnson for a number of years and the Commission had copies of previous disciplinary actions. Chief Sidoran stated that the first action was dated in 1986 when Corporal Johnson

appeared in court with the smell of alcohol on her breath. Commissioner Herrington asked Chief Sidoran again when did he detect a problem with Corporal Johnson. Chief Sidoran stated that he realized a problem when Corporal Johnson refused to take a breathalyzer test while she was on duty. As a result of that Corporal Johnson was suspended for ten days. Chief Sidoran stated that she had an alcohol problem and was asked to seek counseling. She did get counseling but felt that she did not have a problem, this was two years ago. Chief Sidoran stated that Corporal Johnson did not realize she had a problem until she hit the barricade.

Commissioner Lawrence asked why was Corporal Johnson asked to take a breathalyzer test. Chief Sidoran stated that her breath smelled of alcohol. Commissioner Lawrence asked why the Supervisor on duty accepted the accident report from Corporal Johnson. Chief Sidoran stated that her immediate Supervisor was not present and because of the damage to the car the report did not correspond with the damage as written in the report. Commissioner Lawrence asked why a follow up was not done by the supervisor on duty that accepted the report. Chief Sidoran stated that he would look into the follow up procedure.

The City Manager stated that Corporal Johnson could take the demotion and get help through the Employee's Assistance Program.

Rev. Zack Lyde asked the Commission to accept the notion of tolerance and leniency and allow Corporal Johnson to remain on the Police Force.

Commissioner Lawrence moved to hold an Executive Session to discuss the Personnel Matter. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Herrington and was unanimously carried.

Following the Executive Session, Mayor Wilson stated that the Commissioner recommended to suspend Corporal Johnson for 12 months from the Police Department. Commissioner Darrisaw stated that Corporal Johnson may transfer to the Recreation Department until she is rehabilitated through the Employees Assistance Program; however, before Corporal Johnson is reinstated at Police Department she would have to prove that she is rehabilitated. Upon completion of her rehabilitation Corporal Johnson would not have to reapply to the Police Department, but would have to start at entry level.

**MEETING ADJOURNED.**

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Mayor

Attest \_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk