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Lowery wants report released

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O'FALLON

O'Fallon residents soon may know the cost of the City Council's investigation of City Administrator Bob Lowery Jr.

The council voted Thursday night to release the cost. That information is expected to be available at the council's next meeting.

Lowery wants officials to go one step further. Near the end of Thursday night's meeting, he asked the council to release any report detailing the actual investigation.

"My name and reputation was run through the mud," he said.

Lowery was placed on paid leave Jan. 22 but was back on the job during the council's Feb. 26 meeting after the council and mayor met in closed session.

Councilman Pierce Conley, Ward 2, who had issued a news release supporting Lowery, made a motion to release the report. Councilman Bill Gardner, Ward 1, seconded the motion. All but Conley and Gardner voted against releasing the report before legal counsel could review it.

The council, however, voted unanimously to release the cost of the investigation.

The council also unanimously agreed to release information regarding any monetary settlement provided to former Police Chief Jerry Schulte.

According to the Missouri Sunshine Law, salaries are public information.

Finance Director Vickie Boschert said the terms of the settlement had been released to the public, but the amount paid had not been calculated.

According to Schulte's agreement, he would be paid for 682.6 hours of unused sick time and vacation. Starting March 1, and continuing through June 30, Schulte would continue to be paid for those hours. With health benefits, Schulte made \$150,945 per year, according to documents provided by the city.

Boschert said the exact cost would be avail-

able during the council's next meeting on March 26.

Lowery told the Journal on Jan. 12 that he was worried about his job. In a Jan. 15 letter to the council, his attorney, C. John Pleban, said his client was being unfairly targeted as a whistle-blower.

In a previous interview, Pleban said he could not say why he believed Lowery was being targeted.

The period of Lowery's absence had been marked by secrecy. Many city officials refused to acknowledge Lowery was even gone.

During the meeting Thursday, Lowery said his enemies had unfairly characterized his involvement with Global Training Partnership LLC, a Virginia-based law enforcement consulting company. Lowery said his involvement with the company was entirely voluntary and his motives were to help child victims of crime.

"I did this on my own time without any compensation," Lowery said.

Lowery said he was willing to give up his right to privacy to have the report released and that he had not been given the opportunity to read such a report.

City spokesman Tom Drabelle said not allowing the subject of an inquiry to review any report about him or her is a standard human relations policy. City Attorney Kevin O'Keefe said he was not able to explain or comment on the policy. O'Keefe also said he could not confirm the existence of the report Lowery asked to be released.

Schulte announced in December that he was stepping down. He told the Journal he was asked to retire. City officials had denied that Schulte's retirement was not his idea.

Interim Police Chief William K. Seibert Jr. took the lead of the department Jan. 9, the day after Schulte retired. As of Friday, the city had not named a permanent replacement.

While Lowery was on leave, Mayor Donna Morrow confirmed Schulte applied for his old job but then withdrawn his application.

The Journal has filed a Sunshine Law request with the city regarding the report about the Lowery investigation.



Lowery

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