

Censure Response Packet

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE OFFICIAL RECORD

Mayor and Council,

This letter provides my formal response to the censure request dated November 13th, 2025. It also directs the reader to the attached chronology and supporting documentation. I respectfully request that this entire packet be included in the public record – in full.

Before I address the concerns raised, I want to clearly express that I do not doubt that everyone in that room cares about this city. And in difficult moments, I try to assume good intentions even when actions fall short. However, caring about our city does not relieve us of the responsibility to follow the law, respect our processes, and uphold the policies and values that protect both residents and staff – all staff – not just the ones. Good intentions cannot replace good governance.

What has been presented in the censure request is not an accurate reflection of what occurred. It is a selective account that omits critical context and uses descriptors that align with harmful, racially coded language historically applied to Black women in leadership.

I will say this plainly:
This censure is not about my conduct — it is about my refusal to participate in what was improper and outside the legal authority of the council.

The censure request quotes a fragment of my words. Here is what I said, in full context, while gathering my belongings and exiting the room:

“Y’all can have this council. I refuse to be a part of this.”
F Chief Bell, what he gon do? I’m not going to jail for y’all.”

My use of strong language in that moment was a direct reflection of the level of distress, alarm, and ethical shock I experienced as the conduct continued and escalated. I was appalled, anxious, and increasingly aware that the majority of the Council had no intention of stopping or course-correcting, despite my repeated interventions. It was the breaking point where I realized I could no longer remain in that room without compromising my professional obligations and exposing myself, the Interim, and the City to significant legal risk.

As an organizational development and ERP-governance professional, I am trained to uphold strict ethical and compliance standards. My work requires Sarbanes–Oxley–aligned controls, anti-retaliation protocols, and disciplined leadership. I apply these standards consistently in every environment I serve. I am required to identify, halt, and refuse participation in conduct that crosses statutory, ethical, or procedural boundaries. This includes constant vigilance against behaviors resembling retaliation, coercion, abuse of authority, intimidation, or the creation of misleading documentation.

Based on this training and the conduct I witnessed, it was clear that members of the Council were engaging in actions consistent with multiple statutory violations under Sarbanes–Oxley principles, whistleblower protection standards, the Texas Whistleblower Act, and the Texas Penal Code — including retaliation, official oppression, abuse of official capacity, and the improper creation or solicitation of governmental records. My refusal to remain involved was not emotional; it was the direct fulfillment of my professional and ethical obligation to prevent unlawful conduct and protect the City, its employees, and myself from legal exposures.

DISCLAIMER

This packet does not violate The Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA):

- TOMA cannot be used to conceal violations of law
- Executive session confidentiality does not extend to illegal acts.
- A public official does not commit a crime by reporting or documenting unlawful conduct.

All information presented here is based on observations, conduct, and actions that can be lawfully disclosed. Supporting emails will be provided post redaction.

Condensed Timeline of Events

A detailed affidavit-level chronology has been prepared separately. The following is a factual, high-level summary for the public record/agenda packet.

October 20, 2025: Concerns were raised to 3 councilmembers after a Council meeting regarding potential personnel actions involving two staff members, including comments about their qualifications and their future with the City. One individual was described as someone the Interim wished to terminate, and the other as someone she intended to remove once a new City Manager arrived. The Council members present advised that any concerns or actions should be deferred to the incoming City Manager and handled through proper HR channels and legal process.

November 5, 2025: we were made aware an employee submitted a whistleblower grievance to three members of the Council, invoking protections under the Texas Whistleblower Act and expressing fear of retaliation. During a called meeting, discussions began that went well beyond the posted agenda and outside the legal authority of the Council. Despite repeated reminders that this was a whistleblower matter requiring outside legal counsel, certain members continued discussing potential disciplinary actions, performance issues, and personnel matters improperly before the body. I could not remain in the room. We took a break and were advised to send staff home— including HR, the Chief, and the City Secretary.

We reconvened and the situation escalated at that point in time because the director level employee who had filed the grievance was brought into executive session and questioned in a manner that was inappropriate, retaliatory, abusive, and inconsistent with HR standards, legal protections, and basic professional standards. I intervened and disrupted multiple times to stop conduct that was improper, outside the scope of our authority, a huge risk to the city, and that was harmful to the employee.

November 6th-14th: Following the meeting, I contacted HR, the Mayor, and let them know I was contacting TML Legal for guidance, and I shared the legal direction I received with the appropriate parties. The Council's stated direction was to secure outside legal counsel for the whistleblower investigation.

On November 6, an email was sent to all staff that did not align with TML guidance or the Council's stated direction. I raised immediate concern that the communication could be inconsistent with the protections required in a whistleblower matter. I was urged by colleagues to reconsider my dissent. I declined, as doing so would violate the guidance I had received and my ethical obligations.

On November 8th, I reviewed the packet and followed up with TML to request confirmation on the procedure for next steps.

On November 12th, I shared the written response and guidance from TML legal and requested the council take an action.

On November 13th, the City Attorney responded and noted I would need to get a second council member if I wanted to call a Special Meeting. I had already gone to the Mayor and another Council member for a '2nd.' And based on the insights I'd received from TML, I felt I had fulfilled my responsibility to document, inform myself, and advise. I responded with thanks for the update.

On November 14th, I was informed of the formal request for Censure.

Governance Corrections and Recommendations

To prevent future misconduct, safeguard staff, and strengthen our institutional integrity, I respectfully recommend that the following governance corrections be implemented:

- 1. Adopt Certified Audio Recording of Executive Sessions**

Texas law permits certified recordings of Executive Sessions. Replacing handwritten certified agendas with certified recordings will provide an accurate, objective record and prevent the misuse, manipulation, or misrepresentation of confidential discussions.

- 2. Establish Clear Boundaries Between Council Authority and HR Functions**

Council should never direct, interrogate, discipline, or evaluate the performance of staff outside of what the City Charter authorizes.

- 3. Implement Expanded Mandatory Governance and Compliance Training.**

Training should include and not be limited to:

- Personnel law
- Whistleblower protections
- Anti-retaliation requirements
- Council–Manager form of government boundaries
- Ethical governance practices

These trainings should be required at onboarding and refreshed annually.

- 4. Stream all council meetings to improve transparency.**

Transparency fosters public trust. Meetings should be recorded and archived. If the city does not have the budget to enable streaming, there are multiple advocates and

community options that can be leveraged so that meeting are archived and made available to the general public so that we as elected officials can be held accountable.

5. **Adopt a policy to protect staff from retaliation, intimidation, and abuse of authority.** The city should formalize a clear anti-retaliation policy. Based on information that was shared to me by the interim from previous investigations, this lack of policy is inadvertently creating an environment where employees are without basic safeguards and its exposing the city to unnecessary risk.
6. **Halt all major financial and/or employment decisions until a new City Manager is installed.** I believe our Interim is a highly qualified and competent professional, however they have spent an extended time, in an unsupported dual-role that represents multiple conflict of interest, exposes them to professional liability, exposes the city to liability, and creates potential conflict in the work environment. In addition, the Interim has repeatedly shared (even tearfully,) how the Council repeatedly puts them in positions that are difficult and that they have to mitigate carefully. While there is a lot of verbal encouragement for the interim – there has also been interference and a lack of support. The interim even at one point refused an increase due to optics for the staff as a direct result of how council behaviors were perceived. ***I believe the Councils actions overstep and have created an unhealthy working environment & undue liability for the City.***

IN SUMMARY & FOR THE RECORD

I want it to be clear an unequivocal in placing the following into the official record:

1. The language used in the censure request—terms such as “aggressive,” “attacking,” “threatening,” “concerning safety,” and “unpredictable”—are not neutral descriptors. They reflect racialized tropes historically used to police and discredit Black women, particularly when they assert boundaries or challenge improper conduct. It is especially troubling that such framing was used by colleagues who fully understand the cultural weight and historical harm attached to that language.
2. The attempt to weaponize the community’s affection for Chief Bell to turn residents against me is deeply ironic, given that some of the individuals pursuing this censure have simultaneously participated—knowingly or unknowingly—in actions and conversations that risked undermining him. That contradiction speaks for itself.
3. The behavior directed toward the IT Manager further demonstrates the seriousness of what occurred. The censure request selectively quotes my words while omitting the fact that I was the only person in that room objecting to the antagonizing, berating,

and bullying of that employee. I intervened repeatedly to stop conduct I believed was retaliatory and improper. To suggest that my objections “impugned” anyone is alarming and reflects the culture this Council has permitted itself to operate within.

4. From the beginning of my tenure, I have witnessed a pattern of retaliatory interpersonal behaviors—including hostility, exclusion from information, passive-aggressive conduct, and avoidance—whenever I asked questions, sought clarification, or expressed dissent. Those same dynamics extended to staff: private staff information was discussed across the dais; employees were publicly criticized for absences or personal matters; and Council members issued directives that interfered with staff performing their duties. This environment has discouraged transparency and intimidated both staff and elected officials from raising legitimate concerns.
5. What I witnessed in the last month was not an isolated lapse in judgment but part of a broader pattern of coercive pressure and improper influence over Council authority. I observed efforts to prompt the Council to take personnel actions outside our legal scope, to publicly signal disapproval of certain employees, and to legitimize actions that were neither HR-driven nor procedurally sound. These behaviors reflect a troubling misuse of authority and a breakdown in governance standards that placed both the City and its employees at significant risk
6. When I joined the Council, one of the first things I requested for myself and for the body was additional professional development and governance training. I was new to the Council, and although the Council functioned harmoniously – it lacked structural oversight, policies, and procedures that would enable effective municipal governance. There were no standardized procurement guidelines, no formal processes for accessing information, inconsistent use of meeting packets, and limited adherence to established rules and procedures. In addition it was conflicting and limited guidance on request. In short, the Council operated more like a well-intentioned family than a government entity with legal duties & obligations. I want the record to reflect that this Council needs guidance, leadership, and more training to be a better and more compliant governing body.