

Hiawatha Breaks Silence On Police Department Rumors

Rumors have been running rampant, and speculation high, regarding the current status of a longstanding Hiawatha Police Sergeant.

Word began to circulate late last week, with this news department contacting City Administrator Lynne Ladner. At that time, she stated that Laura Tollefson remains a member of the Police Department, but would not confirm or deny any additional information about why Tollefson has been absent from the office, calling the situation a "personnel matter" on which she can not comment.

Today, that changed, with media pressure cited by Hiawatha officials as the reason for the release of details.

According to a brief press release, sent from Ladner's office but naming Police Chief Evans Woehlecke as the key contact, Tollefson has been placed upon administrative leave from the department, pending investigation.

Concluding, in bold print, the press release states that there is no further comment regarding the investigation.

That leaves more questions unanswered, including what is the focus of the investigation, and is Tollefson's leave paid or unpaid.

A phone call, and voice mail message placed to Tollefson's home by this news department on Tuesday, has gone unanswered.

An exact date of when the suspension began remains unclear, but it's known it happened sometime following a near four hour executive session, during an April 5th special meeting of the Hiawatha City Commission, which included the presence of numerous officials, including the commission, Assistant City Attorney Hillary Boye, Ladner, Woehlecke, Brown County Sheriff John Merchant and Under Sheriff Mickey Gruber, who all met behind closed doors.