



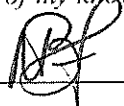
HAMDEN CT
HUMAN RESOURCES &
CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

COMPLAINT INTAKE
 TESTIMONY OF THE VICTIM

1. The Town of Hamden is an equal opportunity employer with an anti-harassment policy. Therefore, it is the duty of each employee to report instances which they believe may be illegal harassment or retaliation based on all legally protected classes, including race, color, religious creed, age, sex, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, learning disability, physical disability or blindness, present or past history of mental disability, intellectual disability, genetic information, criminal record, military or veteran status, or any other protections under Title VII to their direct supervisor and/or to the Human Resources/Civil Service Department.
2. The Town of Hamden and its supervisory employees have a duty to investigate such reports and to take prompt and effective action to prevent and deter any illegal conduct or condition. For these reasons, it is very important that you provide the Town of Hamden with any and all information pertinent to what has occurred, including the names of witnesses, events, dates, times, places, and what was said.
3. You always have the right to assert your claims through the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. You also have the right to terminate this internal Town of Hamden investigation process at any time, but doing so may affect your ability to preserve your legal claims in the future. This does not mean, however, that you can stop the Town of Hamden from investigating or taking necessary actions to prevent further illegal conduct by any of its employees.
4. The Town of Hamden makes every effort to treat these investigations as confidential, and disclose these allegations only to supervisory staff on a "need-to-know" basis. However, there are many instances in which the persons who need to know include your supervisors, any witnesses who must be interviewed, and the person or persons about whom you are reporting in order to get their full response.
5. The Town of Hamden cannot guarantee that each and every fact which you provide will remain absolutely confidential. However, once the Town of Hamden receives such a report, it is required by federal law to investigate with prompt, necessary action to protect this information from unnecessary disclosure in violation of your privacy rights.

Please indicate if you consent to full and honest cooperation with this investigation by signing and dating this form below:

I acknowledge that this information is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and recollection.

Signature of Employee: 

Print Name: Nicole Brown Johnson

Date: 08-01-2024

CT

HUMAN RESOURCES & CIVIL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

AUG 1 24 PM 2:46
TOWN OF HANOVER

HARASSMENT COMPLAINT INTAKE
TESTIMONY OF THE VICTIM

NOTATION: You are submitting an incident report to the Human Resources & Civil Service Department that you have experienced speech, conduct, or behavior that has harassed, disturbed, or has made you uncomfortable on account of or in reference to discriminatory comments based on your race, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, retaliation, or other protections under Title VII. Harassment is defined as conduct that unreasonably interferes with work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Please note: you are not required to prove that all incidents are overtly connected to discrimination. Hostile work environment harassment can be committed by anyone, including management officials, coworkers, non-employees, or subordinates.

Based on the alleged incident of harassment, discrimination, retaliation, and/or a hostile work environment, please answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

Name: Nicole Brown

Name of the Accused: Karen Bivens

Department: Recreation

Department: Recreation

Phone Number: [REDACTED]

Relationship with Accused: Director

[REDACTED]@gmail.com

Date of Incident(s): 07-31-24

Incident Date: 08-1-24

Location of Incident(s): Recreation

Please describe the incident(s) that have occurred:

On Monday, July 1, 2024 I submitted vacation request to Director Bivens. Karen did not respond to email. On Tuesday July 2, Karen stated in Rec. meeting that she would not approve my request at this time because it was close to the event on August 10th and she would need to review. Karen stated for the future she would not be permitting approving vacation for staff from May through August. I did not respond. Since this meeting, Karen has been requesting follow ups regarding the August 10th event. On July 9, she instructed that we would be able to use the tents and tables stored at Town Center Park. On July 16 she ~~also~~ instructed that a layout of the event was needed.

Layout for event was submitted 7/18/24. All requests and information was submitted to Karen without written acknowledgment.

On July 31, a reminder email was sent to Karen regarding vacation. Karen responded by requesting tasks to be completed before a permission can be given. Karen is aware that I would be taking a trip. (asked on July 9th).

Questions to tasks were submitted ~~on~~ on August 1. Karen has now included two other tasks, before I can receive approval for a vacation submitted a month ago. (July 1). Karen has requested that I review with Salvatore another staff member, who is out of office until ~~the~~ Friday, August 2. Hence my vacation approval is contingent on a conversation meeting with another staff member. Salvatore has done all the running of shows, vendor and booking for events for the last 2 yrs. I believe this is clear abuse of power and harassment by holding approval hostage for vacation days that I have earned and requested 30 days ago.



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Please name any potential witnesses to the incident(s):

July 2 - conversation about vacation time - Sallie Howry

July 9 + 16 - Denial of use of town supplies - Peter Laffin, Abdul Bunyamin, Salvatore McClain + Sallie Howry. This instruction was repeated throughout follow up meeting on July 23.

July 31 - ~~Denial~~ Delay in approval of vacation time (by email)

How did you react or respond to this/these situation(s)?

July 2 - I remained silent

July 9-23 - Expressed to Karen that we would be making provisions to acquire tables & tents

July 31 - Did not respond to email. Contacted HR & Union

Do you perceive this incident to be a pattern of behavior from this employee?

This has been a continuous pattern of behavior from Director Bowers. The constant abuse of power, harassment and retaliative nature.

Is it possible to describe the harm you have suffered as a result of this/these incident(s)?

It is overwhelming to continue navigating this toxic and hostile environment. Mentally and emotionally it has been exhausting and distressing. Karen intentionally creates barriers for me + staff to do their duties



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Is there evidence supporting your claim(s)? If so, please describe or submit a copy of the evidence.

Please see documents attached. Karen states she is delaying approval based on needing ~~up~~ status on tasks. Karen has been notified and aware of all progress relating to August 10th event and

What is your desired outcome of the investigation?

Supervisor / Management training for ~~supervisor~~ Director Biven
Communication & Conflict resolution training for Director &
Department
Emotional Intelligence training for Director Biven's

Signatures:

Signature of Employee: _____

Name of Employee: _____

Nicole Brown Johnson

Interview Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____

Investigator's Name: _____

Nicole Johnson

From: Nicole Johnson
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2024 3:22 PM
To: Karen Bivens
Subject: Re: Vacation Request
Attachments: ABSENCE REQUEST_712024.pdf

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached time-off request for August.

Thank you,

Nicole Johnson

From: Karen Bivens
Sent: Wednesday, July 31, 2024 2:52 PM
To: Nicole Johnson
Subject: RE: Re: Vacation Request

Hi Nicole,

I stated before that as observed with camp season, when staff takes vacation right before programming, it can hold up progress. I did not feel comfortable granting time off so soon before an event. You stated that you would have all factors of Caribbean Fest Programming complete so that I could grant approval. I would just like to make sure we're on the same page. Please answer the following questions.

- 1) I have all your invoices for the entertainers. Do you have a vendor number for movimiento? They're the only vendor number I was waiting on.
- 2) Are all vendors and food trucks set up and confirmed for this event? Do you have other exhibitors as well? Please provide a list. Who will be handling communications with vendors and artists in your absence?
- 3) Have you reviewed the site plan with the rest of your team?
- 4) What is the status of the tents?
- 5) Have you requested assistance from Kenny Paecht in Parks regarding setup and general event maintenance (trash collection, etc)?
- 6) What is your plan for set up? I know you will be decorating, do you have all the supplies you need?
- 7) Please submit your Run of Show. Salvatore can help you with that.
- 8) Are there any other details we need to discuss?

Once I receive the answers and supporting documentation, I would be happy to grant approval. Please also note that as with other requests for extended periods, you must communicate with me and Sallie and pending issues, permits, or other activities that we may need to take care of in your absence. Thanks.

Best,
Karen

From: Nicole Johnson <[REDACTED]@Hamden.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 31, 2024 2:05 PM
To: Karen Bivens <kbivens@Hamden.com>
Subject: FW: Re: Vacation Request

Good Afternoon,

Quick reminder about my vacation request for August 5-7.

Thank you,

From: Nicole Johnson
Sent: Monday, July 1, 2024 3:22 PM
To: Karen Bivens <kbivens@Hamden.com>
Subject: Re: Vacation Request

Good Afternoon,

Please see attached time-off request for August.

Thank you,

Nicole Johnson

From: Karen Bivens
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 2:21 PM
To: Nicole Johnson
Subject: RE: Re: VacationRequest
Attachments: RUN OF SHOW Caribbean Festival 8_10_24.docx

Nicole,

Thank you for your response. Your vacation approval and OT approval are forthcoming. Please try to address the following. Whatever you can not finish before you leave, please ask Sallie to help complete you while you're away.

- 1) In Abdul's absence, I have not received the vendor number. Please share it with me.
- 2) Please thoroughly review with Salvatore the Run of Show as submitted. I have highlighted some areas that need review.

Have a great vacation!

Best,
Karen

From: Nicole Johnson <[REDACTED]@Hamden.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 10:51 AM
To: Karen Bivens <kbivens@Hamden.com>
Subject: RE: Re: Vacation Request

Good Morning,

See below answers to your questions regarding event on 8-10-24. I have attached a copy of all requested documents and a third submission of my vacation time request.

Thank you,

- 1) I have all your invoices for the entertainers. Do you have a vendor number for movimiento? They're the only vendor number I was waiting on.
Invoices were submitted to you and Abdul for processing 7/19/24. Vendor number was submitted to Abdul 7/23/24.
- 2) Are all vendors and food trucks set up and confirmed for this event? Do you have other exhibitors as well? Please provide a list. Who will be handling communications with vendors and artists in your absence?
Salvatore as you instructed, in charge of food trucks and vendors. I do not have access for approval of vendors. Access is only available to you and Salvatore. He stated he had 2 food trucks, 2 vendors, and 2 exhibitors.
- 3) Have you reviewed the site plan with the rest of your team?

The site plan was submitted to you and all involved department on 7/18/2024.

- 4) What is the status of the tents?
You instructed that we were not permitted to use the tents and tables in storage at town center park. On Tuesday, July 27, I informed you that we would be acquiring tents through youth services.
- 5) Have you requested assistance from Kenny Paecht in Parks regarding setup and general event maintenance (trash collection, etc)?
Park is aware of the event and their duties. Request was submitted
- 6) What is your plan for set up? I know you will be decorating; do you have all the supplies you need?
Please see layout for setup of venue. Decorations will be reused from previous event.
- 7) Please submit your Run of Show. Salvatore can help you with that.
Salvatore complete run of show. (see attached).
- 8) Are there any other details we need to discuss?
All staff and departments involved are aware of their duties.

From: Karen Bivens <kbivens@Hamden.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 31, 2024 2:52 PM
To: Nicole Johnson <XXXXXXXX@Hamden.com>
Subject: RE: Re: Vacation Request

Hi Nicole,

I stated before that as observed with camp season, when staff takes vacation right before programming, it can hold up progress. I did not feel comfortable granting time off so soon before an event. You stated that you would have all factors of Caribbean Fest Programming complete so that I could grant approval. I would just like to make sure we're on the same page. Please answer the following questions.

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- 3) Have you reviewed the site plan with the rest of your team?
- 4) What is the status of the tents?
- 5) Have you requested assistance from Kenny Paecht in Parks regarding setup and general event maintenance (trash collection, etc)?
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- 7) Please submit your Run of Show. Salvatore can help you with that.
- 8) Are there any other details we need to discuss?

Once I receive the answers and supporting documentation, I would be happy to grant approval. Please also note that as with other requests for extended periods, you must communicate with me and Sallie and pending issues, permits, or other activities that we may need to take care of in your absence. Thanks.

Best,
Karen

From: Nicole Johnson <[REDACTED]@Hamden.com>

Sent: Wednesday, July 31, 2024 2:05 PM

To: Karen Bivens <kbivens@Hamden.com>

Subject: FW: Re: Vacation Request

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