

Investigator unable to prove allegations made by Montesano employees

Local News

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MONTESANO, Wash. - An Independent investigator reports no sufficient evidence to prove several allegations against Montesano city administrator Christy Powell, after a grievance was filed by several city employees alleging sexual harassment, age discrimination, and retaliation. In the wake of several investigations of the department over the past year, the report by investigator Jim Webber of Kirkland-based Jim Webber Consulting, did support claims that Ms. Powell had retaliated by being overly "pleasant;" and that she may have said her cleavage gets in the way of her golf game. Montesano Mayor Ken Estes said in a press release that he supports the findings, and has "the highest confidence in [Powell] and her abilities." Webber was hired by the city after a grievance was filed by Teamsters Union No. 252, listing employees Ken Frafjord, Kay Gueller, Jason Manley, Ryan Watkins and Debbie Wisdom. Webber said attached to the grievance were 49 pages of "a litany of complaints about Ms. Powell," many of which pertained to labor relation disagreements, were unrelated to the grievance. The report stated "some employees said that Ms. Powell is biased against older workers; another claimed the bias is against younger individuals."

The investigator also noted that despite the severity, most were not reported until recently, even though several investigations have taken place in that department over the past year. The 20 page report filed on July first even details a conversation had about a sexual term that Powell didn't understand. We won't use the term here, but it has nothing to do with winter festivities. Webber said "In summary, I have concluded that Ms. Powell did not engage in sexual harassment, age discrimination or retaliation." In the wake of several recent investigations, he added that he recognizes "the strong possibility that the present complaints against Ms. Powell are a direct response to the previous controversies, some of which remain under review." [Press Release, Grievance Against Kristy Powell](#) The report, obtained by KBKW, can be seen below [Montesano Investigation Report 7-8-13](#)