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A shot at city hall

City Manager Chris Eppley discharged a firearm in his office at Keizer City Hall on Thursday, March 4. The city council has contracted with retired Woodburn Police Chief Jim Ferraris to conduct an investigation.

Editorial

The public should be very concerned about this incident. It brings up many questions that need to be answered fully and with transparency. One of the first questions is why there is no police report? Was the Keizer Police Department not immediately notified that there was a gunshot in city hall? If not, why not? Where does the responsibility lay?

Generally the discharge of a firearm, accidental or not, results in an administrative leave of the person responsible, pending an investigation. What is the public to think when the manager of

their city is allowed to remain in office after such an egregious act?

It is a violation of the law that prohibits the firing of a weapon within city limits unless by a public safety officer or someone defending themselves, neither was the case here.

Supporters of Eppley were quick to comment on the firearm discharge. Many came before the Keizer City Council at its March 15 meeting to extol the character of Eppley and his value to the city. All this before an investigation has been completed. Talk about putting the horse before the cart.

Members of the city council should not make any further public statements, nor solicit public comment until Ferraris' report has been presented to the city attorney. The process going forward needs to be clear and transparent. A person's past good works can not lay in the path of doing the right thing.

There are many questions that need to be answered and the public needs to be confident that this incident will not be minimized. Someone could have been killed or injured.

—LAZ

Our new look

Welcome to the new look of the *Keizertimes*. It is our first redesign in more than 30 years.

The redesign allows us to better highlight stories important to the community. It also allows us to publish more articles and information. The tabloid format will be easier for readers to handle. An added bonus is our redesign gives us opportunity to be creative in how we present our stories.

There are two times a year when we expand our circulation and mail the *Keizertimes* to almost 14,000 Keizer homes. We do this to showcase the community's independent newspaper. A community is stronger when its citizens are informed. Whether you are a regular subscriber or getting this in your mailbox (for free), we want everyone to see that we cover the seven square miles of

the city without foul or favor.

News is an important element of democracy. The *Keizertimes* won't please everyone all the time, but our mission never wavers. We gather and report the news of our city, just as we have since the very first issue in 1979.

If you are not a regular reader or subscriber of the paper we hope you like what you see and will support it with a subscription of the print product or a subscription to our online product, keizertimes.com.

We want to hear from you. Let us know what you want to see in the *Keizertimes*, or let us know what you think we're missing. If it is important to the citizens of Keizer, it is important to us.

If it happens in Keizer, it's in the *Keizertimes*.

—Lyndon Zaitz, publisher

Chris Eppley

To the Editor:

The city of Keizer had a bad incident occur recently when the city manager, Chris Eppley, discharged a weapon in his office. The details of the incident have not been made public yet as the city contracted with an independent investigator to determine the facts. Once they are known, the council will have to make a decision as to what to do. The law is very clear that a firearm is not to be discharged within the city, let alone in city hall.

The city council should treat everyone the same way. If a subordinate did what the city manager did, they would be fired on the spot. The same should apply to him. He must be fired.

There are several things in Eppley's favor:

Chris Eppley has been an outstanding city manager with integrity and he has been instrumental in guiding the city through several difficult times. He has made very few mistakes. Eppley worked on urban renewal, getting the new civic center built and Keizer Station completed. He has assembled an efficient staff and team to carry out city business. It would be a serious blunder, in my opinion, to totally lose a dedicated employee because he made a foolish (dumb) mistake.

My solution would be to hire him back after three months with a substantial reduction in salary and benefits. I think that would be just.

Bill Quinn, KEIZER

Same rules for everyone

To the Editor:

In the matter regarding Keizer City Manager Chris Eppley, submitting my own letter to each councilor and speaking before council on March 15, it became quite apparent that this is being considered a popularity contest of sorts.

We are not here to discuss the personal or moral character of the Keizer city manager. We are not here to play favorites or accept faults as a friend might. We are here to discuss the fact that an employee of the city willfully broke rules by bringing a firearm into a city-owned building, resulting in an accidental discharge.

I may be ignorant to work policies in the public sector, but in the private sector, it often does not matter how well liked an employee is or how well they perform their job, if certain policies and ethical guidelines are not adhered to, there are consequences. Often those consequences lead to termination, regardless of job performance, likability, and other personal matters outside of the contract of employer and employee.

In my time, I have witnessed many a

Letters

good person, top performer, and/or well-liked employee make an egregious mistake or ethical mishap. Guess what? They were not above the consequences of their actions. Despite all the great things about their character, the employer still made them beholden to the policies and ethical guidelines established.

Everyone should be held to the same standard. I am sick and tired of seeing rules apply to most but not some. It is not right. It is not equitable. If the city will allow this, what else will they allow? Are others now able to carry a firearm on city property? If the firearm accidentally discharged, they should suffer no consequences, correct? No? Hmm.

Alicia Itzaina, KEIZER

Gun shot

To the Editor:

To no one's surprise, the Chris Eppley firearm fiasco has turned into a political fire fight. The indignant left calls for Eppley's dismissal. The arrogant right says, "no harm, no foul." In between somewhere is the appropriate penalty for the "accidental" discharge of a deadly weapon in an occupied public building.

In my opinion, Eppley is no longer qualified to have a concealed carry permit, and had he been other than a high ranking public official that license would already have been revoked. But, that's only my opinion and the investigator will have to determine if Eppley's "distracted while gunsmithing" plea let's him off the hook.

Finally, and again only my opinion, there must be a consequences for what could have been a deadly lack of attention. Dismissal is probably too much, "extreme sorrow" is certainly not enough.

Martin Doerfler, KEIZER

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TO SUBMIT

a **letter to the editor** (300 words),

or **guest column** (600 words),

email us by noon Tuesday:

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