



**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
CARROL MITCHEM, CHAIRMAN  
BUD CESENA, VICE CHAIRMAN  
ANITA MCCALL  
CATHY DAVIS  
JAMIE LINEBERGER

**COUNTY MANAGER**  
DAVIN W. MADDEN

**COUNTY ATTORNEY**  
MEGAN H. GILBERT

**CLERK TO THE BOARD**  
AMY S. ATKINS

February 17, 2023

**NOTIFICATION IN PERSON**

Hannah Ruth Houser  
191 Planters Row Road  
Iron Station, NC 28080  
*via hand delivery*

**RE: Disciplinary/Dismissal Final Decision**

Ms. Houser:

A pre-dismissal/disciplinary conference was held on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 9:30AM regarding your failure to comply with the Lincoln County Personnel Policy for violation of the following sections of the Lincoln County Personnel Policy:

- Section 16.2 Employee Harassment (Hostile Work Environment)
- Section 16.2.1 Unlawful Harassment
- Section 16.3 Workplace Violence
- Section 17.3.1.1 Unacceptable Personal Conduct
- Section 5.3.1 Non-exempt Employees
- Section 17.3.1.4 Grossly Inefficient Job Performance

Following that conference, final review of all evidence and findings were reviewed and it was determined that the following violations were conclusive reasons for discipline:

- Unsolicited and unwelcomed conduct based upon an employee's disabling condition during the employee's pregnancy in the form of manipulation, intimidation, and hostility towards the employee during their pregnancy;
- Intimidation by the Director against employees which is a conduct for which no reasonable person should expect to receive prior warning;
- Job related conduct that constitutes a violation of State or Federal law in that Director required an employee to work overtime hours without proper compensation;

- Conduct unbecoming an employee that is detrimental to the agency's service in that the Director required an employee to work overtime hours without proper compensation and therefore causing the County to be liable for those unpaid overtime hours and other potential fines from the North Carolina Department of Labor. This is also a violation of Section 5.3.1 of the Lincoln County Personnel Policy; and
- Grossly inefficient job performance in that the Director has failed to satisfactorily perform the requirement of the job, and the failure has resulted in the loss of or damage to agency funds that result in a serious impact on the County.

During the pre-disciplinary meeting you did not provide any evidence, in addition to the evidence you had previously provided in interviews, to counter the findings of the investigation. It was also addressed in the pre-disciplinary meeting that I am acting in the role of the County Manager under the Personnel Policy given the conflict of interest that existed between yourself and the County Manager. The County Attorney conducted this investigation as my designee pursuant to Section 16.2 of the Personnel Policy, and did not conduct this investigation in her role as an attorney, but rather as an investigator to provide me with the factual findings of the investigation.

Therefore, based my review and investigation, it is Lincoln County's decision that this letter serve as official notice that your employment with Lincoln County is terminated effective Friday, February 17, 2023 immediately following the conclusion of this meeting. You are required to return all County owned property to the County Administration Building immediately.

Pursuant to Section 18.5 of the Personnel Policy, the County Manager's decision is final, and therefore there is no right to appeal this decision. However, given the unusual circumstances, I will allow you to provide me with a written letter of re-consideration within ten (10) days of this decision.

Respectfully,



Carrol Mitchem  
Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners

cc: Personnel File