

Judge Jerry Evans poor management of Municipal Court results in wrongful arrest and delays in Hattiesburg's audit

The City of Hattiesburg Municipal Court was at the center of alleged corruption and mismanagement back in the summer of 2012. An HPD internal affairs report leaked to the media, revealed many concerns about a couple of the judges and several clerks there. The report detailed allegations of clerks taking bribes in the form of cash, EBT cards, and designer purses in exchange for disposing of warrants, misinforming judges, and even allegedly altering judges' rulings.

The Court, at that time, was under the police department and Police Chief Frazier Bolton. In the wake of the fallout, all three judges resigned and council restructured the court as an independent entity; not under a particular department or under the control of any particular person but the Municipal Judge. It was the council's intent to give the judge everything they needed to have the buck stop with that judge. The mayor appointed Jerry Evans, and he was approved by council.

Since the court has been under the Management of Judge Evans, things are getting worse, according to a letter from Wanda R. Courter, an auditor trying to get Hattiesburg's books up to date. The city's previous auditor, Nicholson and Associates actually performed forecast of the receivables and books for the court in prior years, instead of actually requiring a full accounting. Since the new auditor has taken over, a higher standard of accountability appears is in effect, and Judge

Evans doesn't appear capable of meeting that higher threshold.

.

In a letter to the city clerk and accounting department Ms. Courter states,

"From an overall perspective, we (the auditing firm) have received less data to use in our audit at this point than we had received at this time in the prior year audit."

Courter goes on to state,

"Municipal Court fines and related accounting have been the subject of internal control findings for the last several years. Underlying deficiencies in procedures and controls have continued, and subsidiary reports of Court fine transaction activity for the fiscal activity for the fiscal year ended 9/30/15."

While this may just seem like financial matter, citizens are being arrested for "unpaid fines" which have been previously paid and not properly recorded. Issues with duplicate entries and improper recording are of particular concerns.

These are the same things which also happened in the 2012 Municipal Court Scandal.

Judge Jerry Evans' inability to manage his court's records are actually causing citizens' rights to be violated and wrongfully arrested. A lawsuit obtained by the Hattiesburg Patriot reveals that Ms. Liza Diaz was arrested on March 1, 2015. Represented by Attorney Christopher Farris, the complaint reads,

"During the course of the traffic stop, Officer Tate advised the Plaintiff that there was an outstanding warrant for her failure to pay an old speeding ticket. She pleaded with the officer advising that she had already paid the ticket a year

earlier and that the receipt was at home. Unfortunately, he took her to jail where she remained for more than 24 hours, children crying and upset, arrested and her photo placed on the jail house times for all to see.

Her Husband brought the receipt to the jail to try to have her released immediately. He was told there was no one in Municipal Court on the weekend to verify the payment. The following day an employee came into work and confirmed the fine had been paid on April 1, 2014."

Farris alleges on behalf of Ms. Diaz,

"Plaintiff would submit that the actions of the city of Hattiesburg Municipal Court in failing to properly enter the payment of the fine in the Court's system led to her wrongful arrest and incarceration."

If you have been wrongfully arrested for unpaid fines, WHERE YOU HAVE A RECEIPT OF PAYMENT, contact this site.

All Documents are below.

[jerryevans](#)