

ARCHIVE

City tells Grieshaber: Repay or we'll sue

Officials want the ex-city manager to repay the city \$15,650.



By **SHEILA MULLANE ESTRADA**

Published Jan. 28, 2007

City officials are threatening to sue former city manager Al Grieshaber Jr., claiming he overcharged the city by more than \$20,000 in relocation and compensation time costs.

The city attorney is preparing a "demand letter," which will be sent to Grieshaber asking for the \$15,650.04 balance. The city already withheld \$4,675.55 from vacation pay due Grieshaber.

"This whole thing is so surreal," Commissioner Jose Coppen said Tuesday, as a unanimous city commission directed City Attorney Andy Salzman to pursue the matter in court if Grieshaber does not reimburse Indian Rocks.

"Somebody ought to go find Al and arrest him for what he has done to the city," said Richard Smith, a resident and member of the city's Board of Adjustment and Appeal. He and other residents called for a full investigation.

ADVERTISEMENT

Particularly at issue are a \$13,124.28 check paid to Grieshaber for undocumented relocation expenses and \$7,201.31 paid to Grieshaber for 173.15 hours of what the

Tampa Bay Times

Grieshaber has defended his charges for compensation time, as well as his moving expenses.

During the special comp time appeal hearing, Grieshaber said his contract with the city allowed him to take whatever comp time he "deemed appropriate." He argued that the contract language was "not subject to interpretation" and "is clear and unambiguous."

The commission denied the appeal, countering that the comp time taken violated the city's personnel rules.

"He has taken this (contract language) as a license to be generous with himself," Coppen said.

Grieshaber did not indicate whether he would further appeal the commission's ruling in court.

Later, during the regular portion of the meeting, the commission discussed at length a check issued personally to Grieshaber to cover moving expenses provided for in his contract.

The same amount (\$13,124.28) was issued in March to a moving company, but later stopped by the city when Grieshaber said his home in Sanford had not sold. In August, when his home did sell, Grieshaber asked for another check in the same amount, this time made out to himself personally.

ADVERTISEMENT

He told city finance director Martin Schless that Salzman had approved the payment, but that apparently never happened. The check was issued with the caveat that Grieshaber was to provide full receipts. So far, Grieshaber has turned over receipts totaling less than \$1,000. He says he traded personal goods and/or cash to friends and individuals who helped to move his goods and signed an affidavit that the money was spent only for moving expenses.

Tampa Bay Times

Grieshaber approved his own mileage claims.

Grieshaber was hired a little more than a year ago and now serves as general manager at Sun n' Lake, an improvement district near Sebring in Highlands County.

Meanwhile, the city is revising the wording of its city manager contract in an attempt to prevent a similar situation with future city managers.

"The real reason we had this problem was that the city manager was operating under his own discretion," Mayor Bill Ockunzzi said

The commission has received 17 applications for the now-open city manager post and will review their top picks at a Feb. 6 meeting. During the review process, Schless is serving as acting city manager but is not responsible for supervising the city's various departments.

UP NEXT: [Nightstand](#)

YOU MIGHT ALSO LIKE

Pope Francis holds Christmas Eve Mass amid Italy surge

3 hours ago

• News

Bucs' Mike Evans named NFLPA Community MVP for Week 16

5 hours ago

• Sports