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April 28, 2025

Via E-mail and U.S. Mail

City of Antioch
Attn: City Clerk/Claims Administrator
City Hall
200 H Street
Antioch, CA 94509
Email: cityclerk@antiochca.gov

Re: Government Tort Claim on Behalf of Steven A. Ford Pursuant to Government
Code § 910 et seq.
Our File No.: 10749-00

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that our office represents Steven A. Ford, former Chief of Police for the City of Antioch. Pursuant to the California Government Claims Act (Gov. Code §§ 810 *et seq.*), Mr. Ford hereby presents the following claim against the City of Antioch, including its elected officials, agents, and employees. This claim arises from the unauthorized disclosure of confidential personnel information by City officials in late 2024, which has caused substantial damage to Mr. Ford's reputation, career, and emotional well-being.

Enclosed please find the Government Claim detailing the facts, legal theories, and relief sought. We respectfully request that the City review this claim in good faith and contact us should there be any interest in resolving the matter prior to litigation. If no action is taken within the statutory period, we will proceed to initiate a civil lawsuit as permitted by California law.

Please direct all further correspondence regarding this matter to our office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Soriano'.

Brian E. Soriano
Of Counsel
g3mh, LLP
Attorney for Claimant, Steven A. Ford

GOVERNMENT CLAIM UNDER CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE § 910

1. Name and Address of Claimant and Representative for Notices

Claimant

Steven A. Ford
c/o g3mh, LLP
1388 Sutter Street, Suite 1000
San Francisco, CA 94109-5454
(415) 673-5600

Public Entity

City of Antioch
City Hall
200 H Street
Antioch, CA 94509

Involved Officers/Employees

- Former Mayor Lamar Thorpe (also known as Lamar Hernandez-Thorpe);
- City Manager Bessie Scott; and
- Other City of Antioch employees or agents responsible for the unauthorized disclosure, whose identities are presently unknown.

2. Date, Time, and Location of Incident

- Dates
 - November 27, 2024 (confidential email summarizing allegations)
 - December 3, 2024 (media publication of leaked information)
 - February 18, 2025 (City's private memorandum to Ford confirming the allegations were unfounded)
 - April 2025 (notification that Ford was not selected as Police Chief)
- Location
 - Antioch City Hall; East Bay media outlets, including the *Antioch Herald* and *East Bay Times*

3. Circumstances Giving Rise to Claim

Mr. Ford was subjected to an internal investigation by the City of Antioch in November 2024, based solely on an unverified accusation from his estranged spouse. On November 27, 2024, City Manager Scott summarized the unsubstantiated allegation in a confidential email sent only to then-Mayor Thorpe. That email was leaked to the press, causing widespread public damage to Mr. Ford's reputation. The City's negligent or intentional failure to secure confidential personnel information, as required by Penal Code § 832.7, directly caused the unauthorized disclosure, and

its refusal to publicly retract the allegations amplified the reputational damage. This breach of the City's statutory duty to safeguard personnel records directly enabled the harmful disclosure.

At no time prior to the media leak did the City of Antioch notify Mr. Ford that he was under investigation or that such allegations had been made. He was not provided an opportunity to respond or to participate in the process. Indeed, Mr. Ford first learned of the allegations—and the City's internal investigation—only after they had been disclosed through the media.

Further, Mr. Ford was not provided with a copy of the investigation findings until after the undersigned attorney contacted the City to address the publication of false and defamatory information. Only then, on February 18, 2025, did the City issue a written memorandum confirming that its internal investigation had concluded and that the allegations against Mr. Ford were unfounded. However, this communication was preceded by inconsistent representations by the City. On February 12, 2025, the undersigned attorney contacted the interim City Attorney, seeking confirmation that no internal investigation was pending, noting that Mr. Ford had received no notice, was never interviewed, and had been separated from the City for over one year. After receiving no response, a follow-up message was sent on February 19. On February 24, the interim City Attorney replied that an investigation was "open and pending," documentation of which is available upon request. Mr. Ford did not receive the February 18 letter, which confirmed the investigation was closed with a finding of "Unfounded," until February 27, 2025. The City's inconsistent communications, including falsely stating on February 24, 2025, that the investigation was "open and pending" after it had concluded, demonstrate bad faith and aggravated harm to Mr. Ford. This bad faith and the City's negligent or intentional disclosure of confidential information form a pattern of misconduct that aggravated Mr. Ford's injuries.

Despite privately acknowledging the allegations were unfounded, the City's failure to publicly retract the accusations perpetuated the damage to Mr. Ford's professional standing.

Shortly thereafter, Mr. Ford was informed that he had not been selected as Antioch Police Chief, despite reaching the final interview stage. Mr. Ford had publicly supported then-candidate Ron Bernal, who defeated Mayor Thorpe in the November 2024 election, raising serious concerns that the City's conduct and failure to repair the public damage were motivated, at least in part, by political retaliation. Discovery will clarify whether former Mayor Thorpe or other officials were aware of Mr. Ford's endorsement and acted with retaliatory intent.

4. Legal Bases for Claim (Causes of Action)

Claimant alleges the following legal violations:

- Defamation (Libel *per se*).¹
- False Light.²
- Invasion of Privacy (Public Disclosure of Private Facts).³

¹ These violations stem from the unauthorized disclosure and failure to navigate harm, not the investigation itself, rendering immunity under Gov. Code § 821.6 inapplicable.

² These violations stem from the unauthorized disclosure and failure to navigate harm, not the investigation itself, rendering immunity under Gov. Code § 821.6 inapplicable.

³ These violations stem from the unauthorized disclosure and failure to mitigate harm, not the investigation itself, rendering immunity under Gov. Code § 821.6 inapplicable.

- Breach of Confidentiality (Penal Code § 832.7). This breach of the City's statutory duty to safeguard personnel records directly enabled the harmful disclosure.
- Violation of Peace Officer Procedural Bill of Rights Act (POBRA) (Gov. Code §§ 3300 *et seq.*). The City violated Gov. Code §§ 3304 and 3305 by failing to notify Mr. Ford of the investigation, denying him an opportunity to respond, and improperly disclosing personnel information. These POBRA protections apply to Mr. Ford, to the extent applicable, as a former officer, given the investigation's impact on his personnel record and reputation.⁴
- Political Retaliation (California Constitution, Art. I §§ 2, 3).
- Violation of California Labor Code §§ 1101 & 1102.
- Failure to Hire in Retaliation.
- Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress (IIED) and Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress (NIED).
- Declaratory and Injunctive Relief.

Claimant also reserves the right to assert additional causes of action after discovery, including civil rights violations under state or federal law.

5. Injury and Damages

- Severe reputational harm in the law enforcement and broader community
- Loss of past and future employment opportunities
- Emotional distress, humiliation, and mental anguish
- Economic damages, including lost wages, future income, and attorneys' fees
- Continuing harm to career prospects, public image, and professional standing

6. Amount of Damages

The amount of damages is currently unliquidated but exceeds \$500,000. This includes general and special damages, such as lost wages from the Antioch Police Chief position, emotional distress damages from public humiliation, attorneys' fees, and statutory penalties where permitted, subject to proof at trial.

7. Relief Sought

- Monetary damages (economic and non-economic)
- A public retraction and apology, published in the *Antioch Herald*, *Times Herald*, and *East Bay Times* and on the City's official website, acknowledging that the allegations were unfounded and that Mr. Ford committed no misconduct.
- Injunctive relief prohibiting future disclosures of protected personnel records
- Attorneys' fees and civil penalties

⁴ See *Riverside v. Klitgaard* (2018) 180 Cal.App.4th 1206 (POBRA protections may extend to former officers in investigations impacting personnel records or reputational harm).

- Any other relief deemed appropriate

8. Timeliness and Compliance

This claim accrued on or about December 3, 2024, when Mr. Ford became aware of the defamatory publication and the City's investigation through media reports. It is presented in compliance with California Government Code §§ 910 and 911.2 and is timely filed within six months of accrual.

9. Exhibits

- **Exhibit A** – February 18, 2025 letter from Acting Chief Joseph Vigil to Mr. Ford confirming the investigation concluding with a finding of no misconduct
- **Exhibit B** – December 5, 2024 article from the *Antioch Herald* reporting on the leaked confidential email sent only to then-Mayor Thorpe concerning the investigation into former Chief Ford
- **Exhibit C** – December 3, 2024 article from the *East Bay Times* reporting on the City's initiation of an investigation
- **Exhibit D** – October 30, 2024 article from the *Antioch Herald*, titled "Former Police Chief Steve Ford endorses Bernal for Mayor," documenting Chief Ford's public endorsement of mayoral candidate Ron Bernal
- **Exhibit E** – April 17, 2025 article from the *East Bay Times* reporting the appointment of Joe Vigil as the permanent Antioch Police Chief, confirming Mr. Ford's non-selection

Respectfully submitted,



Brian E. Soriano
Of Counsel
g3mh, LLP
Attorneys for Steven A. Ford

EXHIBIT A

ANTIOCH POLICE DEPARTMENT



February 18, 2025

TO: Steve Ford

FROM: Joseph Vigil
Acting Chief of Police

SUBJECT: **Internal Affair Investigation IA24-022**

The purpose of this memo is to inform you that, pursuant to Antioch Police Department Policy 300.7.1 Chain of Command Review and Final Disposition, the above internal affair investigation has been completed by an outside independent investigator not employed by the Antioch Police Department.

The independent investigator has determined that the allegations related to the above investigation were *Unfounded*.

This memo will be placed in your personnel file (IAPro) and maintained in accordance with policy and state law.

Joseph Vigil
Acting Chief of Police

Original: Personnel File

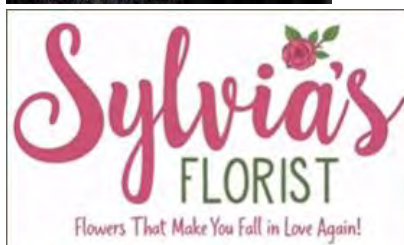
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City manager's email only sent to Hernandez-Thorpe of investigation into allegations of possible misconduct with staffer by former Antioch Police Chief Ford leaked to reporter



Antioch Mayor Lamar Hernandez-Thorpe speaks as announced, new interim police chief Dr. Steve Ford looks on during a press conference on police staffing and incentive programs for hiring more officers on Monday, April 4, 2022. *Herald file photo.*

Made by estranged wife during divorce proceedings

Leak exposes City to lawsuit

“This is unfortunate. This is a private, personal matter and has nothing to do with Chief Ford’s past performance” – former City Manager Con Johnson who hired Ford.

By Allen D. Payton

An [article by the East Bay Times](#) published Tuesday, December 3, 2024, revealed an administrative investigation of possible misconduct by former Antioch Police Chief Steven A. Ford with a subordinate city employee during his brief tenure in the position. Ford was [hired as interim police chief in April 2022](#) and was [appointed to the permanent position that October](#). He retired from the position effective August 11, 2023.

An email from Ford's estranged wife, Julia, who is pursuing a divorce, was sent to District 1 Councilwoman Tamisha Torres-Walker about the allegations, who in turn informed City Manager Bessie Scott who then began an investigative process. It was confirmed today, Thursday, December 5, that the email referred to in the Times article was sent by Scott only to Mayor Lamar Hernandez-Thorpe after he asked her to put in writing details about the matter.

Rumors have circulated recently that Ford was hoping to be hired again as Antioch's police chief following the election of the new mayor and council members. He [endorsed Ron Bernal for mayor](#) and attended an election night party in Antioch where all three candidates and their supporters celebrated.

"Scott's email is dated Nov. 27, roughly two weeks after Ford's estranged wife on Nov. 12 emailed city officials accusing Ford of 'dating someone who worked in Antioch' last year," the Times article reads. It also claims that in her email Scott wrote she reported the allegations to the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), as required by state law (see below).

In [Ford's retirement announcement](#) on July 19, 2023, just two days after [another Times article](#) revealed additional racist text messages among the department's officers including one referring to him, Ford wrote, "It is with a heavy heart that I forward this email to inform that I will be retiring as of August 11th. My time here has been both a tremendous opportunity and quite challenging. What is most meaningful to me are the relationships I have forged. I'm grateful for the way you embraced me and the changes we made. I firmly believe with your help and determination this organization is poised to move forward in a very meaningful way and evolve where anyone would want to work."

The Times article is based on the reporter's claim of an internal email by City Manager Bessie Scott dated Wednesday, Nov. 27, that he obtained, which mentions the administrative investigation for which "an outside investigator" has been hired. It also reports that Ford is currently in the midst of a divorce and that the "proceedings began around the time of his resignation."

As [previously reported](#), Ford's wife was a 26-year veteran of the San Francisco Police Department at the time of his oath of office ceremony in April 2022 and she joined her husband at the podium to pin him with his new chief's badge.

Former City Manager Con Johnson Shares Concerns About Investigation

Former Antioch City Manager Cornelius "Con" Johnson, who worked with Ford during their time in the San Francisco Police Department, hired him for the top cop position in Antioch.

When reached for comment Johnson said, "This is unfortunate. This is a private, personal matter and has nothing to do with Chief Ford's past performance. I understand Tamisha received an email from his estranged wife with accusations against the chief."

"There's not even a victim," the former city manager continued. "I've never heard of an investigation into a personal matter. We're still talking about a ghost. We don't know who the accuser is or if that's been verified or confirmed. Normally the person would be named. We've seen this in other departments. This, here, is a hit piece, a scare campaign to undermine the chief's performance with the City of Antioch."

"The facts that have been printed are this complaint came from his estranged wife about possible accusations," Johnson stated. "I'd just like to caution people to not jump to conclusions until all the facts are in and give the chief the presumption of innocence. It all stems from a divorce process. This is between him and his wife."

"The City does not have the authority to investigate a former city employee. I'm perplexed. I've never heard of an investigation of a former employee," he added.

Asked about the possibility that the leaked email exposes the City to a lawsuit by Ford, Johnson said emphatically, "Absolutely. Because what ends up happening is, personnel matters are private and this should never have been leaked to the press in the first place and they don't have the authority."

"The city manager answers to all city council members. This is an unorthodox way to release information," he continued. "If all of the council members have not been briefed about this matter, it's inappropriate in and of itself. The city manager has the legal requirement and responsibility

"It's very disturbing that two of the council members didn't know about this and found out about it through the press. That's completely inappropriate," Johnson added.

Efforts to reach the former police chief for comment were unsuccessful prior to publication time.

Questions for City Staff, Mayor, Two Council Members Go Unanswered

Questions were sent Tuesday morning to City Manager Bess Scott, City Attorney Thomas L. Smith, Human Resources Director Ana Chavez and the five current council members. They were asked to whom the internal email dated Nov. 27 referenced in the article was sent, and if it was Cortez and Smith. They were also asked who is conducting the administrative investigation into the allegations against Ford.

They were asked if the council members were sent the email or informed of it before the article was published and if so, which council members.

They were also asked if they know who leaked the email to the Times' reporter, if any of them had done so and if an investigation has been commenced to determine who leaked it.

A copy of the email was also requested to be sent to the Herald.

No responses from the city staff members were received prior to publication time.

Two Council Members Say They Didn't Receive Email

Asked if they received the email both District 3 Councilwoman Lori Ogorchock and District 2 Councilman Mike Barbanica said they did not nor know about it before the article was published.

"Nor have I seen the email," Barbanica added.

However, both of them said it was a personnel matter, and they shouldn't have been apprised of a former employee.

"Since it's a former employee and an HR issue I shouldn't have notification. Unless there was legal action," Ogorchock responded.

Ford is "an ex-employee who doesn't and never did answer to the council," Barbanica stated. "We're not apprised of every internal investigation that occurs."

Hernandez-Thorpe and Councilwomen Torres-Walker and Monica Wilson were also contacted separately with the same questions. Additionally, Torres-Walker was asked about the email she received from Julia Ford. But the mayor and two other council members did not respond prior to publication time.

Hernandez-Thorpe Questioned Without Response

Hernandez-Thorpe was asked separately why he found it necessary to send the city manager's email about the matter to the media and if it was to derail Ford's chance to return as police chief. The mayor was also asked if it was a revenge move of payback against Ford and what had happened between the two of them since the mayor had heaped praise on him during his grandiose oath of office ceremony when Ford was first appointed as Antioch's interim police chief.

During that ceremony, Hernandez-Thorpe said about Ford, "Today, marks a new day for the Antioch Police Department and for our city, Chief Ford is Mr. Police Reform, and I look forward to his leadership getting us past our small divisions and towards a collective and shared vision for our future as a city. So, congratulations, Chief Ford for joining us in the City of Antioch." (See [related article](#))

Finally, the current mayor, who was recently soundly defeated for re-election and whose last day in the position is next Tuesday, was asked, "Doesn't your action now expose you and the City to a lawsuit by Steve potentially costing the City taxpayer dollars to pay for outside legal counsel?" and "Is this how you want to leave your position?"

He did not respond to the additional questions prior to publication time.

Public Records Act Requests

A Public Records Act request was made by the Herald for any and all emails from Nov. 27 through Tuesday, December 3, 2024, by and between Scott, Smith, Cortez and Interim Police Chief Brian Addington, any other City of Antioch staff member and any council member, and any email communication by any city council and/or staff member with anyone at the East Bay Times or San Jose Mercury News regarding the allegations against Ford.

They were also asked on Wednesday, Dec. 4 to include any and all emails from council and City staff members to their own personal email accounts and to anyone else about the matter with Ford.

Finally, the four were asked if the release of the email by someone on the council or city staff to the media or anyone else about a former city employee, especially a sworn police officer expose the city and that individual to litigation by Ford.

Investigations of Police Misconduct Required by State Law

According to an [article on the Police Officers Research Association of California \(PORAC\) Legal Defense Fund website by Mike Rains](#), of law firm Rains, Lucia, Stern, St. Phalle & Silver, California state law, known as [Senate Bill 2 \(SB-2\)](#), requires the reporting and investigation of accusations about police misconduct. Rains serves as the attorney for the Antioch Police Officers Association, of which police chiefs are not allowed to be members.

The "new law establishes a requirement that peace officers in California be 'certified' by POST, to serve in that capacity, and provides a new mechanism by which POST may review an officer's alleged commission of 'serious misconduct.' Of major significance is the ability of POST to now make a determination on whether to suspend or revoke the officer's certification," he wrote.

"Beginning January 1, 2023, pursuant to section 13510.8(c)(1), law enforcement agencies are responsible for the completion of investigations of "serious misconduct" even if the officer has resigned employment," Rains' article continues.

The article further shares, "Penal Code section 13510.9(a)(2) requires an officer's employing agency to report to the Commission any complaint or allegation made against an officer that could result in suspension or revocation of an officer's certification...any finding or recommendation by a civilian oversight entity, including a civilian review board, civilian police commission, police chief or civilian inspector general, that an officer engaged in conduct subject to suspension or revocation" and "the final disposition of an investigation that determines an officer engaged in conduct that could result in suspension or revocation of certification, regardless of the discipline imposed."

Please check back later for any updates to this report.

This entry was posted on Thursday, December 5th, 2024 at 6:23 pm and is filed under [City Council](#), [Government](#), [News](#), [Police & Crime](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

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EXHIBIT C

NEWS > CRIME AND PUBLIC SAFETY • News

Probe opens after ex-Antioch chief accused of improper relationship with city staffer

Steven Ford had been brought in as a reformer



Antioch police Chief Steven Ford speaks during a city council public comments meeting at the Antioch City Hall in Antioch, Calif., on Tuesday, April 11, 2023. (Ray Chavez/Bay Area News Group)



By **NATE GARTRELL** | ngartrell@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

UPDATED: December 4, 2024 at 6:34 AM PST

ANTIOCH — The city has opened an administrative investigation into allegations the former police chief — [who left the scandal-plagued department nearly 18 months ago](#) — was involved in an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate during his tenure, this news organization has learned.

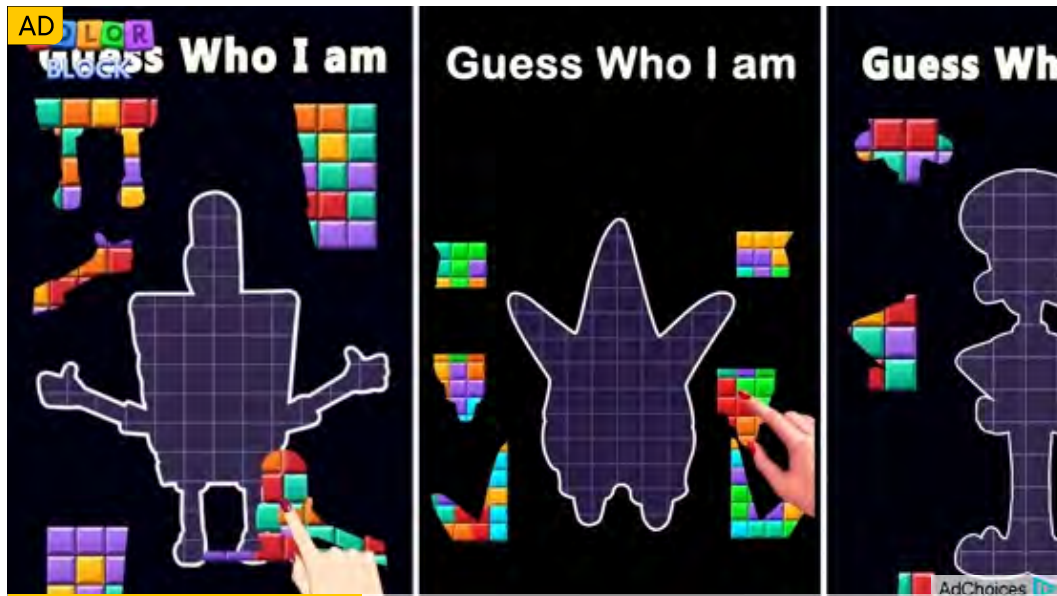
In an internal email obtained by this newspaper, Antioch City Manager Bessie M. Scott confirmed that ex-police Chief Steven Ford is being investigated after a tipster notified city officials of “potential misconduct” by Ford during his time as police chief, which ended in July 2023. Scott’s email notes that the tip came from someone other than the “aggrieved party” and cites the government code section that prohibits police officers from having sex while on duty.

RELATED: [Antioch settles lawsuit linked to police brutality case](#)

Scott’s email is dated Nov. 27, roughly two weeks after Ford’s estranged wife on Nov. 12 emailed city officials accusing Ford of “dating someone who worked in Antioch” last year while Ford was chief, according to an email this news organization obtained.

Ford and his wife are in the middle of divorce proceedings. On Nov. 18, Ford’s lawyer filed a motion in court accusing the woman of missing deadlines to disclose her finances and running a “harassment campaign” against Ford while the two remain living together.

In her email, Scott says the city is mandated to investigate the complaint against Ford, has hired an outside investigator and plans to brief the Antioch City Council on the matter. The city has also notified the state Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training of the allegations.



“We are taking this matter seriously,” Scott wrote.

Neither Ford nor his lawyer responded to requests for comment.

phones as part of a joint investigation into rampant misconduct at both the Antioch and Pittsburg police departments.

Ford, a longtime veteran of the San Francisco Police Department, was brought in as a reformer and pledged an overhaul of the city's use of force policies and training procedures.

It was a bumpy ride, only made worse by disclosures into the FBI investigation, which resulted in [criminal charges against 14 current and former East Contra Costa cops](#) in August 2023. Along the way, [numerous officers from Antioch were placed on leave for involvement in group chats](#) where racist, sexist and homophobic remarks were made, [including racist comments about Ford](#) and the city's outgoing mayor, who are both Black.

In a letter announcing his resignation in July 2023, Ford said he was "proud" of accomplishments during his relatively short tenure. "I sincerely hope our engagement with the community will continue and flourish," he wrote.

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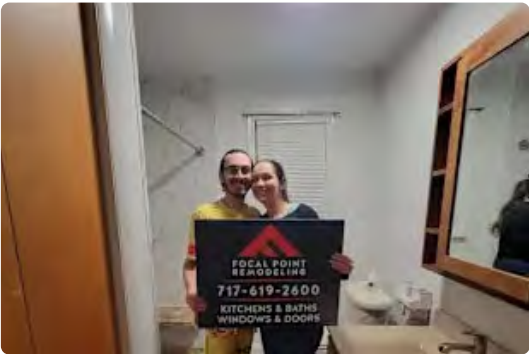
Ford never stated his reason for leaving the department. His divorce proceedings began around the time of his resignation. After leaving Antioch, he tried and failed to obtain [chief jobs in Oakland](#) and at Cal State East Bay.

Originally Published: December 3, 2024 at 8:58 AM PST

The Trust Project

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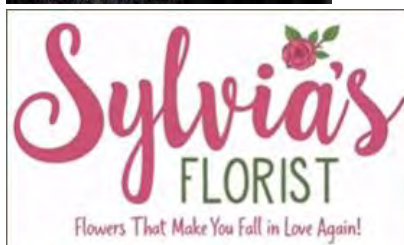
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Former Antioch Police Chief Steve Ford endorses Bernal for Mayor



Retired Antioch Police Chief Steven Ford endorsed Ron Bernal for Mayor of Antioch in a video posted on Facebook Oct. 30, 2024. Sources: screenshot (left) and Bernal campaign photo (right).

Calls the challenger, “the ideal leader Antioch needs at this most critical time.”

By Allen D. Payton

In a text message received on Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2024, the Bernal for Antioch Mayor campaign announced former Police Chief Steve Ford had endorsed the candidate in this year’s election against incumbent Lamar Hernández-Thorp.

Ford wrote:

“Hello...this is Ret. Antioch Chief of Police, Steven A. Ford. I want to let you know why I am endorsing Ron Bernal for Mayor of Antioch.

As a law enforcement professional, practitioner, academic, and researcher with over thirty-three years of experience, I have learned the importance of a balanced approach to the co-production of public safety between community and law enforcement; anchored in community trust, transparency, and proactive community engagement.

Ron Bernal embodies the character traits essential to cultivating a vibrant-healthy community.

As a long-time resident, former city servant, and community steward, I know Ron is committed to strong relationships, accountability, and a solutions-based approach, which makes him the ideal leader Antioch needs at this most critical time.

As Antioch’s forthcoming Mayor, I am confident Ron Bernal will make public safety and community partnerships his main priority while also anchoring city-wide trust and collaboration which is sorely needed now more than ever.

Ron has a healthy vision for the city that will coalesce everyone under a strong sense of belonging and community.

I strongly suggest Ron Bernal receive your consideration for Mayor. The city of Antioch needs and deserves a compassionate forward-thinking leader.

Thank you for reading!”

Also, on Oct. 30th, a brief [video of Ford](#) was posted on Bernal’s Facebook page in which the former police chief said, “Hello, my name is Steven Ford and I’m the retired Chief of Police, here in the City of Antioch and I’d like to make it very clear that I endorse Mr. Ron Bernal for Mayor for the City of Antioch.”

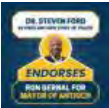


Oct. 14, 2024, post on Bernal’s Facebook page.

Earlier, on Bernal’s Facebook page on Oct. 14, a message from Ford was posted which read the same as two portions of the text message and that he endorsed the first-time candidate for public office, that day.

Hernández-Thorpe announced Ford’s hiring as the interim police chief on Feb. 23, 2022, during a press conference to which he didn’t invite the other council members. Then in April 2022, Ford was celebrated during an unprecedented, grandiose ceremony. The acting chief was then promoted to the permanent position on Oct. 23rd and less than nine months later, on Aug. 11, 2023, he retired.

the attachments to this post:



Dr. Steven Ford’s endorsement of Bernal 10-14-24 FB



Steve Ford endorses Ron Bernal video screenshot & campaign photo 10-30-24

This entry was posted on Thursday, October 31st, 2024 at 7:00 am and is filed under [News, Politics & Elections](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

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LOCAL NEWS • News

Antioch announces permanent police chief, assistant city manager

Joe Vigil, Brad Helfenberger previously in acting roles



Brian Addington, left, the interim police chief announced his retirement and will be replaced by Captain Joe Vigil, right, during a press conference on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025, in Antioch, Calif. Vigil will take over as interim chief as the city searches for a new permanent police chief. (Aric Crabb/Bay Area News Group)



By **HEMA SIVANANDAM** | hsivanandam@bayareanewsgroup.com

UPDATED: April 18, 2025 at 5:50 AM PDT



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over.

[Acting Chief](#), [Department](#), while [Brad Helfenberger](#), who was recently appointed interim assistant city manager, will now assume the role on a permanent basis.

The city said the moves signal a “strong and deliberate step toward stability, accountability, and progress.”

Antioch City Manager Bessie M. Scott said the appointments will strengthen leadership in the city.

“Chief Vigil and Helfenberger both understand the unique challenges facing Antioch. They have each demonstrated vision, the ability to inspire, and a deep passion for making Antioch a great place to live and work,” said Scott in a statement on Thursday.

According to the city, Vigil’s appointment sets the “framework for a new future” for the Antioch Police Department, one rooted in transparency, reform, and constitutional policing.



With Vigil, Scott said the city will continue working with the [U.S Department of Justice](#) after scandals involving its police department and affirm Antioch’s commitment to “meaningful change.”

“This will not be the same police department,” said Scott. “We have turned a corner. This leadership solidifies our direction and our resolve.”

Scott believes that Vigil is the “right leader” to push the police department forward.

Vigil has been
2023, following
In January, Vigil
agreed to a new
who recently



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position in
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Addington,

Vigil has 25 years of law enforcement experience, having worked with police departments in Sacramento, Richmond, and Antioch. He received a bachelor's and master's degree from California State University, Long Beach.

Helfenberger, who has more than 25 years of experience in municipal government, originally joined Antioch as the city's Recreation Department director in February 2021. He has served twice as the interim assistant city manager and has worked with Emeryville, the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District, and Milpitas.

He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Recreation degree from San Jose State University.

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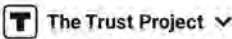
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The [city had engaged the recruitment firm Bob Hall and Associates](#) to conduct a nationwide search for the two positions. The recruitment process included community-wide feedback forums and public surveys, as well as feedback from stakeholders and the city council.

Originally Published: April 17, 2025 at 4:38 PM PDT



Around the Web

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