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## Danbury, Mayor Boughton Sued By Former Secretary

DANBURY - Mayor Mark's Boughton's former executive secretary has filed a lawsuit against him and the city alleging that she was discriminated against when fired from the position last year.

In the complaint, Wendy DaCosta, who worked for the mayor's office from April 2004 to August 2011, claims that she was fired for violating anti-harassment policies while other male employees, including Boughton, were not disciplined for similar conduct.

Her suit also alleges that the city did not provide her with due process and violated the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

Boughton, meanwhile, called the claims "nonsense" and "baseless," adding that he has never been the subject of a harassment complaint. He described the lawsuit as an effort by a disgruntled former employee to "deflect attention from her own behavior."

The lawsuit stated that DaCosta had a relationship with Public Works Director Antonio Iadarola that began in 2007 and ended in early 2008.

Iadarola, according to the complaint, had filed a harassment complaint against her in April 2008 for allegedly calling the public works director and sending him text messages after the relationship had ended.

DaCosta, the complaint stated, had been disciplined on several occasions about the matter and was terminated on Aug. 18, 2011, the same day that she filed a request for medical leave to attend a local addiction treatment center to deal with a substance abuse problem. That request was denied by the city's human resources officer, Virginia Alosco-Werner, who is also named in the lawsuit.

Mike Rose, an attorney representing the city in the matter, said Friday that the city had already initiated the termination prior to DaCosta's request for medical leave.

"The termination was scheduled well before the FMLA request," he said, adding that the request "doesn't stop the termination and can't be used as a defense shield."

A letter written by Alosco-Werner to DaCosta on Aug. 18 that was obtained by The News-Times Friday said "I have read the letter you delivered this afternoon requesting a Family and Medical Leave. Given that your employment has been terminated, this request is not relevant and will not be considered."

The letter also states that the "appropriate authorities" would be contacted concerning allegations that DaCosta kept her ex-husband on her health insurance plan well after the couple's divorce was finalized in November 2009.

The complaint stated that "the Mayor and other male employees accused of violations of the city's anti-harassment policies have either not been disciplined or were provided sufficient due process prior to termination or disciplined."

The lawsuit provides no evidence to support claims that Boughton and other male employees engaged in harassment. Elizabeth Maurer, an attorney representing DaCosta, declined to comment on the nature of the allegations laid out in the complaint against the mayor and others, stating only that she is waiting for documents related to Freedom of Information request she made with the city.



Maurer added, however, that she has reason to believe, after consultation with several individuals, that "people have been caught" involved in consensual sex in City Hall during the evening hours while the building was open for a City Council meeting and that a complaint may have been involved.

She declined to name who may have been involved in the alleged incident.

Boughton said he has no information about any such incident, adding that "nobody in my office has violated the anti-harassment policy and her allegations and complaints are baseless and groundless."

"We fully believe this will be dismissed when we go to court," he added. The city has moved to have the case transferred to federal court.

Neither Iadarola or DaCosta could be reached for comment.