



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 29, 2019

CONTACT: Andrew Teitz, Town Solicitor

TELEPHONE: (401) 331-2222

EMAIL: [zoning@utrlaw.com](mailto:zoning@utrlaw.com)

## **STATEMENT OF THE EAST GREENWICH TOWN COUNCIL ON ROB WARNER**

EAST GREENWICH, RHODE ISLAND – Upon taking office, this Council inherited 59 active litigation matters, labor grievances and Unfair Labor Practice complaints from the prior administration. Among them was a grievance filed by fire fighter Rob Warner relating to his termination for allegations of insubordination and conduct unbecoming. While there were allegations relating to the deletion of computer files, the prior administration waived the right to assert those claims, as it did not assert those as a basis for his termination. Therefore, they were not an issue in the pending grievance. According to Former Chief Robinson, the administration did not pursue those claims in favor of seeking the criminal prosecution of Mr. Warner. His understanding was that this decision was made after former Town Solicitor D'Agostino advised that the criminal prosecution might not be pursued by the authorities, if the matter were already being addressed by the Town in connection with Mr. Warner's disciplinary action. The limited scope of Mr. Warner's termination was confirmed by the former Solicitor who advised in writing: "I want to make clear, he [Mr. Warner] was not terminated due to the actions that gave rise to the criminal prosecution ...[deletion of computer files]".

Regarding the criminal allegations, the matter was disposed of with a plea of *nolo contendere* to the misdemeanor of computer trespass. This record may be expunged after one year, assuming there are no further such actions. The Council also reviewed the allegations with the East Greenwich Police Department, who did the investigation, and the Attorney General's Office, who handled the prosecution. Both advised that they could not conclude that any actions of Mr. Warner put residents at risk.

While we do not condone Mr. Warner's actions, we recognize that they occurred in a highly unusual time in our community where emotions were running high, particularly in the Fire Department. We also recognize that Mr. Warner had an exemplary record of service during his prior 16 years of service.

In settling this matter, we are doing what is in the best interest of the taxpayers, given that the likely outcome of the pending grievance would see the Town ordered to reinstate Mr. Warner and to pay him all back wages with interest. Under the terms of this settlement, Mr. Warner pays a high price for his actions, as he will be reinstated, but the Town will not pay him back wages and he will effectively have been suspended without pay for one year. Mr. Warner also will be subject to a last-chance agreement that provides for immediate termination, should there be any further misconduct within the next year.



The Council fully expects that Mr. Warner will take advantage of this opportunity and that he will serve the residents of East Greenwich with the same professionalism that characterized his prior 16 years of service to our community.

We now move forward.

####