

Pasadena's Foster subject of lawsuit

Published on Monday, October 24, 2011

By Pasadena Star Staff Writer

PASADENA - Newly hired Pasadena Public Works Director Siobhan Foster has been named in a wrongful termination suit filed against her in Riverside County, according to court [documents](#) obtained by this newspaper.

The lawsuit, filed in 2010, alleges that Foster instructed public works staff in Riverside to forgo the competitive bidding process for city contracts in clear violation of the Riverside's municipal code.

The suit, which also names the city of Riverside, goes on to allege that Foster permitted projects without inspections and also claims that when two whistle-blowers threatened to come forward, Foster told a former city employee, "If this gets out, I'm out."

The suit alleges that Foster sent two city employees to Riverside City Council meetings to "keep tabs" on the two potential informants.

Since the suit is still pending, Foster would have no comment, Pasadena spokesman Tim McGillivray said Monday.

The suit was filed by former city of Riverside employee Sean Gill, who after almost three years of service was, in his words, "terminated without explanation" in 2009. Gill described Riverside as a city tainted with corruption.

"(The city of Riverside) had me do a lot of things that were unethical and illegal," Gill said Monday.

Jeb Brown, supervising deputy city attorney for the city of Riverside, said "Mr. Gill's case is without merit and (the city) looks forward to vigorously defending the city's interest."

Brown declined to comment on any claims made in the lawsuit.

Gill also claims that top Riverside officials instructed him to "falsify" documents to fast track a project funded by federal Community Development Block Grants.

"The engineers at Riverside couldn't get the plans out in time to meet the CDBG requirements," Gill said. "They put [the project](#) out to bid, fast-tracked the process. I had to falsify documents that the work was done, have a check for the contractor cut, and put the check in my desk until the work started more than a month later."

Gill said Foster had intimate knowledge of everything related to the use of CDBG money.

"Everything had to be approved through the director," Gill said. "She knew all about it."

Pasadena City Manager Michael Beck also came to Pasadena from Riverside where he was an assistant city manager. Beck is not named in the suit, but defended his choice of Foster to replace Martin Pastucha as Pasadena's public works director.

"There was nothing in the litigation that was of concern," Beck said. "It's really a lawsuit against the city in which (Foster) is named."

During Foster's tenure in Riverside, allegations of misdeeds emerged in local newspaper reports.

According to a 2009 report by the Riverside Press-[Enterprise](#), the city employed what Gill called an "odd" scoring system to award a \$10.5 million sewer contract