

Fairview Police Dept. investigation ends without charges

Former officer involved in inquiry set to go overseas

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FAIRVIEW — A months-long investigation into a series of bizarre circumstances at the Fairview Police Department will not result in criminal charges, and the former officer at the center of the case is pleased to have the matter behind him, according to his attorney.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation confirmed that it closed the case several weeks ago after the district attorney decided not to pursue the matter in court. Andrew Hyatt, city manager for Fairview, said he learned last week that the case was closed. That there will be no criminal charges is good news, Hyatt said, and he expects to soon discuss potential administrative outcomes with the police chief and elected officials.

“I’m not a police officer or a firefighter, but I supervise those two areas and I want to make sure we’re doing what we should,” Hyatt said.

At issue was a flurry of in-house accusations of inappropriate behavior. One officer surreptitiously kept notebooks detailing another’s exploits, according to department officials, and in 2008 the death of a department K-9 made waves when the dog’s handler hastily buried the animal without telling city officials. Those incidents ultimately prompted the resignation of one officer and the firing of another in late 2010. Shortly thereafter the TBI opened its investigation.

“There was never enough evidence to go forward with criminal charges,” said Kim Helper, the district attorney for the 21st Judicial District.

On an informal level, Helper said agents from the TBI made recommendations to the Fairview Police Department on how to better handle evidence, document internal strife and other policy matters. Helper declined to detail the scope of the investigation, but she confirmed that the 2008 incident involving the dead K-9 was part of the inquiry.

Jamie Ferrell was a sergeant when he quit the force on Dec. 1, and it was his behavior that loomed largest in the state’s investigation. He was responsible for the department K-9 that died in 2008. At the time of his resignation, Ferrell was expecting to transition to a supervisory position with the 23rd Judicial District Drug Task Force, an agency to which he had been assigned while working for the Fairview Police Department. His employment was suspended pending the state investigation, and Ferrell’s attorney said recently he never got the job.

“Unfortunately, Mr. Ferrell lost his job and got a bad rap out of this,” said David Raybin, Ferrell’s attorney.

Ferrell has found work with a private security firm that holds a contract with the federal government and is in Texas receiving training, Raybin said. Ferrell expects to be sent to Iraq, where he’ll provide security for U.S. State Department employees. Though his client “certainly suffered as a result” of the investigation, Raybin said Ferrell understands TBI’s responsibility to conduct a thorough review.