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Adoma costs city more than \$13K in legal battle

Stonecrest, GA – Stonecrest city attorney Janet Scott and city staff members were in court Tuesday for a preliminary injunction hearing on a temporary restraining order filed by the city against former council member Diane Adoma. The city filed the action after the former councilwoman illegally attended an August 26th city council meeting and acted as a council member though she officially vacated her seat by qualifying to run for another office on August 23rd. City video and records showed that Adoma attended an executive session and attempted to vote as a council member in the meeting though she had another order signed by Judge Mark Anthony Scott confirming the fact that she could not keep her council seat. The former councilwoman also used her key and brought a CBS 46 camera crew into city hall and viewed private files of the city clerk Megan Reid. The legal action to protect the orderly running of the city costs taxpayers in excess of \$13,000.

A temporary restraining order was signed by Superior Court Judge Clarence Seeliger on August 30, 2019, after a hearing that Adoma failed to attend. The order states that Seeliger also finds that the District 5 seat is vacant and prohibits Adoma from acting as a Stonecrest City council member in any respect including attempting to participate in any council meeting, attempting to access unauthorized areas of city hall, and harassing or attempting to direct city employees.

The Georgia Constitution states that any elected official automatically vacates their seat when they qualify to run for another elected office and “the term of the office for which such official is qualifying for begins more than 30 days prior to the expiration of such official’s present term of office.” Adoma’s District 5 term doesn’t expire until December 2021. The seat for which she is running has a term that begins in January 2020.

Judge Seeliger granted Adoma the opportunity to defend and have the temporary restraining order set aside at Tuesday’s hearing. Adoma told the court that she was not a threat, having never been derogatory toward the staff. Adoma claimed that she went through security to attend the council meeting though she would have to use a key to access the executive session that she attended. She said that Judge Scott told her that she could attend the meeting; yet, she failed to say that the judge denied permission for her to act as a council member.

City Attorney Scott reiterated the justification that the city has for the order. Out of an abundance of caution, the city is asking that the restraining order be extended so that the city can function in an orderly manner without the past interference, Scott asked. Seeliger said in court that he would make the order permanent though Adoma had complied with most of the temporary order. The judge said Adoma could file a motion to set aside his order if she wins another elected position in the city.

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