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SANDRA SPAGNOLI

Beverly Hills' Top Cop – Out of a Job

The city 's first female police chief, Sandra Spagnoli, left her position after complaints of misconduct inside police headquarters.

By **Eric Leonard** and Andrew Blankstein • Published April 25, 2020 • Updated on April 25, 2020 at 2:51 pm



The Beverly Hills Police Department's chief, Sandra Spagnoli, suddenly retired this week following years of employee lawsuits, settlements, and jury awards that have cost residents more than \$7-

million.

The City said in a statement Saturday her last day would be May 15.

"I am grateful to have served Beverly Hills and proud of the accomplishments over the past 4 years to keep this world-class community one of the safest in the nation," Spagnoli said in a prepared quote.

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Several law enforcement and other sources said that Spagnoli was notified earlier in the week she had until Friday, April 24, to resign or face possible termination.

Spagnoli, hired in 2016 as the city's first female chief with a salary and benefits topping \$500,000 a year, had been dogged by accusations that she used slurs and made insulting remarks about Jews, employees who were LGBTQ and Black, and others, and promoted mostly white men, with some of whom she was accused in court documents of having sexual contact.

When she was hired the City Council said it selected her to address years of problematic management of the department, and she was immediately tasked with implementing a series of reforms recommended by outside consultants.

The city had previously denied Spagnoli behaved inappropriately with subordinates, and in a statement last year city attorney Laurence Weiner said the city was, "deeply disappointed by the personal attacks on the integrity of our police department."

"My first reaction is what took them so long?" said attorney Brad Gage, who represented the majority of the Beverly Hills Police officers and employees who have sued over Spagnoli's alleged misconduct.

"It does serve as vindication for all my clients, and I'm hoping that with her departure - the police department can start on the path to the improvements it needs," he said. "Unfortunately, there are others who have supported her ideals who remain employed there, so the city has a long way to go."

It was not immediately clear what prompted the action to remove Spagnoli, though it appears the process began shortly after another Beverly Hills Police officer sued her on March 30, alleging he was denied a promotion and had his assignment interfered with, after he claimed he refused to begin a sexual relationship with the chief.

That officer, Scott Dibble, says in the case he was eventually promoted, but only after initiating legal action.

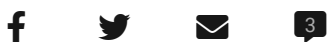
"He has since been denied promotion several times, initially to sergeant because of his refusal to have a sexual relationship with the Chief..." according to his complaint, which was also filed by attorney Gage.

Prior to Spagnoli's tenure the City had been pressed to find a new police administrator after a series of public controversies, including revelations an officer had inappropriately peered under a sheet to see Whitney Houston's dead body at the Beverly Hilton hotel in 2012, and several complaints officers faced retaliation for refusing cover up misconduct.

Spagnoli previously served as police chief of the San Leandro and Benicia Police Departments in the Bay Area.

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