



City of Duluth Communications Office

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DATE: 1/9/2025

SUBJECT: City of Duluth releases report of external investigation regarding alleged conflict of interest and misappropriation of city resources

BY: Kelli Latuska, Public Information Officer

City of Duluth releases report of external investigation regarding alleged conflict of interest and misappropriation of city resources

[DULUTH, MN] On October 16, 2024, Duluth City Administrator Dave Montgomery initiated an independent external investigation into alleged conflict of interest and misappropriation of city resources. This followed an internal investigation by the Duluth City Attorney into the same allegations. The external investigation was conducted by Michelle M. Soldo of Soldo Consulting, P.C. between October 17 and December 12, 2024. The report was delivered to City Administrator Montgomery and City Attorney Terri Lehr once completed.

Soldo's investigation was based on a substantial records review including staff text messages, emails, and call logs documenting any interactions staff may have had with Mayor Roger Reinert's campaign volunteer and partner, Ms. Amber Gurske. Soldo also conducted witness interviews with staff and the mayor.

The report of findings from Ms. Soldo confirms that the allegations about Ms. Gurske and her interactions with staff were not substantiated and based on incomplete information and inaccurate speculation and conjecture. Soldo's investigation also confirmed that interactions between Ms. Gurske and staff were not illegal or unusual, and she was not compensated with public funds. These findings were consistent with the results of the City's internal investigation.

"I want to thank Ms. Soldo for expediting this investigation and reporting its findings in a thorough and comprehensive manner," said Montgomery. "The results are what I expected to see based on the City Attorney's investigation."

Mayor Reinert is voluntarily posting the entirety of Soldo's report of findings online for full transparency. Soldo's report is available in full and without redaction at

<https://duluthmn.gov/media/nwuneput/msoldo-report-full-december-2024.pdf>.

“Ms. Gurske did not violate any legal or ethical standards, nor did anyone on our team violate City codes or the City charter. I am gratified the clear findings of this report can now bring this matter to a conclusion,” said Mayor Reinert.

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