



BROWARD OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 24, 2020

Electoral and Ethical Misconduct by the Mayor of the Town of Pembroke Park

Broward Inspector General John W. Scott announced today that the Broward Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued a [final report](#) concluding that Town of Pembroke Park Mayor Ashira Mohammed engaged in past ethical misconduct by misusing her public position to benefit herself and her law firm. We also found that the mayor engaged in electoral misconduct during her campaign for a seat in Florida House of Representatives, District 101—a campaign that was ongoing during our investigation into whether the mayor engaged in ethical misconduct.

Our investigation determined that, during the run up to the August 18, 2020, primary election, Mayor Mohammed violated Florida’s “Little Hatch Act” when she arranged for a paid member of her campaign to post as the mayor on the town’s Facebook page to increase her online presence and thus influence votes and affect the outcome of the election. This not only amounted to electoral misconduct but also a misuse of position where the mayor was able to secure this benefit for her campaign and herself by wrongfully using her official role as an administrator on the town’s Facebook page in violation of Florida’s ethics laws.

The mayor compounded her electoral misconduct by failing to timely and properly resign her seat on the town commission before qualifying for state office, in violation of Florida’s resign to run law. She then filed a sworn oath certifying that she had, another instance of electoral misconduct.

The mayor also engaged in past ethical misconduct during her tenure in office when she misused her official position and town resources in her trust. We established several incidents in which the mayor wrongfully used the town’s facilities, equipment, and personnel as well as corruptly misused her mayoral credentials to benefit her law firm and herself and for no public purpose.

The town acknowledged our findings and implemented a policy limiting the number of employees with access to the town’s social media pages. It also committed to review its employee code of conduct and expressed its intent to update its Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

In her response, the mayor made assertions about the report’s findings, the law, witnesses’ credibility, and facts, which the OIG rejected and refuted. In one representative example, she asserted that, in trying to fulfill the mandates of the resign to run law, she submitted her resignation to the wrong official because the town has no deputy town clerk—and thus no qualifying official for election filing purposes. Notwithstanding the mayor’s various assertions and defenses, the response did not negate our findings.

John W. Scott, *Inspector General*

One North University Drive, Suite 111 • Plantation, Florida 33324 • (954) 357-7873 • Fax (954) 357-7857

www.browardig.org • (954) 357-TIPS