



# CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

DEPARTMENT OF CITY CIVIL SERVICE  
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CITY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
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DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL

Monday, June 9, 2025

Ms. Jacqueline Goff

Re: **Jacquelle Goff VS.  
New Orleans Public Library  
Docket Number: 9621**

Dear Ms. Goff:

Attached is the decision of the City Civil Service Commission in the above-referenced appeal.

This is to notify you that, in accordance with the rules of the Court of Appeal, Fourth Circuit, State of Louisiana, the decision for the above captioned matter is this date - 6/9/2025 - filed in the Office of the Civil Service Commission at 1340 Poydras St. Suite 900, Orleans Tower, New Orleans, Louisiana.

If you choose to appeal this decision, such appeal must conform to the deadlines established by the Commission's Rules and Article X, Sec.12(B) of the Louisiana Constitution. Further, any such appeal shall be taken in accordance with Article 2121 et. seq. of the Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure.

For the Commission,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doddie K. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Doddie K. Smith  
Chief, Management Services Division

cc: Emily Painton  
Elizabeth A Weigand  
Imtiaz A. Siddiqui  
file

**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS**

**JACQUELLE GOFF,  
Appellant**

**Docket No. 9621**

**v.**

**NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC LIBRARY,  
Appointing Authority**

**DECISION**

Appellant, Jacqueline Goff, brings this appeal pursuant to Article X, Section 8 of the Louisiana Constitution seeking relief from the New Orleans Public Library's (NOPL) termination of her employment, effective June 14, 2024, for making unfounded complaints about her co-workers. (Ex. HE-1). At all relevant times, Appellant was a permanent employee working as a Library Associate I. (Ex. Goff-5). A Hearing Examiner, appointed by the Commission, presided over a hearing on June 8, 2024. At this hearing, both parties had an opportunity to call witnesses and present evidence.

The undersigned Commissioners have reviewed and analyzed the entire record in this matter, including the transcript from the hearing, all exhibits submitted at the hearing, the Hearing Examiner's report dated April 9, 2025, and controlling Louisiana law.

For the reasons set forth below, Ms. Goff's appeal is DENIED.

**I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

On May 6, 2024, NOPD Officer William Hannah responded to a call for service from Jacqueline Goff at the Children's Resource Center at 913 Napoleon Avenue. (Tr. at 9). According to Officer Hannah, Ms. Goff reported to him that one employee demanded money from Ms. Goff and another employee mentioned a person from Ms. Goff's high school who had assaulted Ms.

Goff. (Tr. at 14). Officer Hannah interviewed three NOPL employees and the security guard who were present at the Children's Resource Center on May 6. (Tr. at 14). Officer Hannah made no arrests because no crime had been committed. (Tr. at 17-18).

Ivy Beaver testified that Ms. Goff accused her of demanding money from Ms. Goff, but that this allegation was untrue. (Tr. at 36). Ms. Beaver also testified that she was required to appear in court on May 21 to defend herself from a motion for protective order filed by Ms. Goff. (Tr. at 37). The court denied the motion for protective order. (Tr. at 37). Ms. Beaver initially resigned, but she returned to work after Ms. Goff was suspended. (Tr. at 37).

Ms. Trevia Bennett, a custodian, was temporarily assigned to the Children's Resource Center beginning on May 4, 2024, because of a lack of air conditioning at her normal work location. (Tr. at 45-46). Because of Ms. Goff's history of allegations against co-workers, on Ms. Bennett's first day, she informed her supervisor that "Jacqueline is here and I don't want no drama." (Tr. at 50). Ms. Bennett testified that she did not talk to Ms. Goff at all while she was assigned to the Children's Resource Center. (Tr. at 49). On May 6, Officer Hannah informed her that Ms. Goff said that Ms. Bennett had threatened her, assaulted her with a cleaning cart in the past, and tried to bully Ms. Goff into spending time with her socially in the past. (Tr. at 45, 48, 53, 55; Ex. Goff-1).

DeRhonda Baptiste, the security guard employed by Pinnacle Security, was stationed at a table near the front door of the Children's Resource Center on the dates in question. (Tr. at 62). Ms. Baptiste testified she witnessed none of the conduct alleged by Ms. Goff. (Tr. at 68-72).

Emily Painton, the Executive Director and City Librarian, testified that she interviewed all the employees on May 6, except for Trevia Bennett and Jeff Bostick. (Tr. at 76). The co-workers interviewed by Ms. Painton failed to corroborate Ms. Goff's allegations: "[E]ssentially, they all

said that nothing had happened.” (Tr. at 77). None of the eight witnesses called by Ms. Goff corroborated any of her allegations.

Ms. Painton also testified that Ms. Goff’s complaint to NOPD was a “major disruption” to the branch. (Tr. at 77). Ms. Beaver sent an email to Ms. Painton on May 8 resigning her employment because of this event. (Tr. at 77-78). Ms. Beaver subsequently rescinded this resignation after she learned Ms. Goff would not be present at the branch. (Tr. at 79). Ms. Painton testified that Ms. Goff has a history of making false allegations against co-workers, and that the Children’s Resource Center is the fourth branch where Ms. Goff made unsubstantiated allegations. (Tr. at 80). Corroborating her history of complaints, Ms. Goff’s May 4, 2024, email to NOPD concerns complaints from 2020 to 2024. (Ex. NOPL-1). Ms. Painton also testified that staffing is affected because other employees do not want to work with Ms. Goff. (Tr. at 81).

## **II. ANALYSIS**

### **A. Legal Standard for Commission’s Review of Discipline**

#### **1. The Appointing Authority must show cause for discipline**

“Employees with the permanent status in the classified service may be disciplined only for cause expressed in writing. La. Const., Art. X, Sec. 8(A).” *Whitaker v. New Orleans Police Dep’t*, 2003-0512 (La. App. 4 Cir. 9/17/03), 863 So. 2d 572 (quoting *Stevens v. Dep’t of Police*, 2000-1682 (La. App. 4 Cir. 5/9/01)). “Legal cause exists whenever an employee’s conduct impairs the efficiency of the public service in which the employee is engaged.” *Id.* “The Appointing Authority has the burden of proving the impairment.” *Id.* (citing La. Const., art. X, § 8(A)). “The appointing authority must prove its case by a preponderance of the evidence.” *Id.* “Disciplinary action against a civil service employee will be deemed arbitrary and capricious unless there is a real and substantial relationship between the improper conduct and the “efficient

operation” of the public service.” *Id.* “It is well-settled that, in an appeal before the Commission pursuant to Article X, § 8(A) of the Louisiana Constitution, the appointing authority has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence: 1) the occurrence of the complained of activity, and 2) that the conduct complained of impaired the efficiency of the public service in which the appointing authority is engaged. *Gast v. Dep’t of Police*, 2013-0781 (La. App. 4 Cir. 3/13/14), 137 So. 3d 731, 733 (quoting *Cure v. Dep’t of Police*, 2007-0166 (La. App. 4 Cir. 8/1/07), 964 So. 2d 1093, 1094).

**2. The Appointing Authority must show the discipline was commensurate with the infraction**

The Commission has a duty to decide independently from the facts presented in the record whether the appointing authority carried its legally imposed burden of proving by a preponderance of evidence that it had good or lawful cause for suspending the classified employee and, if so, whether such discipline was commensurate with the dereliction. *Durning v. New Orleans Police Dep’t*, 2019-0987 (La. App. 4 Cir. 3/25/20), 294 So. 3d 536, 538, *writ denied*, 2020-00697 (La. 9/29/20), 301 So. 3d 1195; *Abbott v. New Orleans Police Dep’t*, 2014-0993 (La. App. 4 Cir. 2/11/15); 165 So.3d 191, 197; *Walters v. Dept. of Police of the City of New Orleans*, 454 So. 2d 106 (La. 1984). The Appointing Authority has the burden of showing that the discipline was reasonable and not arbitrary or capricious. *Neely v. Dep’t of Fire*, 2021-0454 (La. App. 4 Cir. 12/1/21), 332 So. 3d 194, 207 (“[NOFD] did not demonstrate . . . that termination was reasonable discipline”); *Durning*, 294 So. 3d at 540 (“the termination . . . deemed to be arbitrary and capricious”).

**a. Factors considered by Commission**

“In determining whether discipline is commensurate with the infraction, the Civil Service Commission considers the nature of the offense as well as the employee’s work record and previous disciplinary record.” *Matusoff v. Dep’t of Fire*, 2019-0932 (La. App. 4 Cir. 5/20/20), 2020 Westlaw 2562940, *writ denied*, 2020-00955 (La. 10/20/20), 303 So. 3d 313. The Commission considers the nature of the offense, the employee’s work ethic, prior disciplinary records, job evaluations, and any grievances filed by the employee.” *Honore v. Dep’t of Pub. Works*, 14-0986, pp. 8-9 (La. App. 4 Cir. 10/29/15), 178 So. 3d 1120, 1131, *writ denied*, 2015-2161 (La. 1/25/16), 185 So. 3d 749

**3. NOPL has shown cause for the discipline of Ms. Goff**

NOPL has shown that Ms. Goff made unfounded allegations to NOPD against her co-workers, resulting in Officer Hannah interviewing her co-workers on May 6, 2024, at the Children’s Resource Center. (*See* NOPL-1). The allegation that Ms. Beaver demanded money from Ms. Goff is unfounded, and the allegation that Ms. Bennett had physically assaulted Ms. Goff with a cleaning cart years prior is also unfounded. Ms. Goff’s co-workers were subject to interviews from a police officer on May 6, 2024, based on these unfounded complaints.

Ms. Goff’s pattern of making unfounded complaints against co-workers has impaired the efficient operation of NOPL. Other employees do not want to work with Ms. Goff. For example, Ms. Bennett testified that she is now in therapy, and she does not feel safe because of the allegations made by Ms. Goff. (Tr. at 53-54). Ms. Bennett testified that she “watch[es] her surroundings” because she does not know what Ms. Goff’s “motives” or “intentions” are. (Tr. at 53).


In addition, Officer Hannah's interview of Ms. Beaver on May 6 contributed to her resignation. Ms. Beaver rescinded this resignation only when she learned she would not be required to work with Ms. Goff. Ms. Beaver also testified that this incident was "extremely anxiety producing." (Tr. at 38).

**4. The penalty is commensurate with the violation.**

Termination of Ms. Goff's employment is commensurate with Ms. Goff's unfounded complaint to NOPD that her co-workers were threatening her, resulting in an investigation during working hours by Officer Hannah at the Children's Resource Center. NOPL engaged in progressive discipline of Ms. Goff, who had made unfounded complaints at four different NOPL branches over a period of four years.

Therefore, Ms. Goff's appeal is DENIED.

WRITER:

  
[Mark C. Surprenant \(Jun 3, 2025 17:58 CDT\)](#)

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MARK SURPRENANT, COMMISSIONER

CONCUR:



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JOHN KORN, VICE-CHAIRPERSON

  
[Ruth Davis \(Jun 3, 2025 18:26 CDT\)](#)

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RUTH DAVIS, COMMISSIONER