

CITY OF ATLANTA
CIVIL SERVICE BOARD
FINDINGS OF FACT AND ORDER

APPEAL NO. 2017-067AP

Effective Date: December 20, 2017

APPELLANT: **Angela Curtis**

Hearing Date: July 15, 2021

City of Atlanta (“the City”)

Department of Corrections (“the Department”)

ACTION:

HEARING OFFICER/BOARD

Dismissal

Suzanne W. Ockleberry, Chair
Mary Ann Phyll
Herman L. Sloan, DWB

APPEARANCES

City of Atlanta Representative:

Joshua Foster, Esq.

Appellant Representative:

Angela Curtis, *Pro Se*

City Witnesses:

Captain Marnita Travis, Department of Corrections

Major Natasha Johnson, Department of Corrections

Lieutenant Christy Jones, Department of Corrections

Appellant Witnesses:

Cheryl Dowdy

EXHIBITS

- C-1 Notice of Proposed Adverse Action dated December 6, 2017 (the “NPAA”)
- C-2 Notice of Final Adverse Action dated December 15, 2017 (the “NFAA”)
- C-3 OPS Complaint File 17-0103-E-(I)
- C-4 OPS Complaint File 17-238-PO-DOC
- C-5 OPS Complaint File 17-0065-E-I
- C-6 Work Rules 2.32 and 2.36

STIPULATIONS

None.

VIOLATIONS

Dismissal for violation of City of Atlanta Department of Corrections Work Rule:

Rule 2.36(a) Unsatisfactory Performance

SPECIFIC CHARGES

“On October 20 and 24, 2017, [Appellant] failed to indicate on the ARCARD and in the Jail Management System (JMS) that two (2) detainees received a Self-Bond while in Court.

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

After the hearing was called to order and introduction of the parties and hearing panel were completed, Ms. Ockleberry disclosed that she has known the City’s representative – Joshua Foster - for an extensive period of time. Ms. Ockleberry stated that despite her knowing Mr. foster, she could remain fair and impartial. But if requested to do so by the Appellant, that she would recuse herself from herself from further participation in the appeal. It was explained that if the Appellant wished for her to recuse herself that a different hearing officer would be substituted for Ms. Ockleberry and the hearing continued to a later date. The Appellant indicated that she did not object to Ms. Ockleberry continuing to hear her appeal. Thereafter, Mr. Sloan

indicated that he too has known Mr. Foster for an extensive period of time and that he, Mr. Sloan, also knew one of the City's proposed witnesses – Captain Marnita Travis. Mr. Sloan stated that he could and would remain fair and impartial, but that if Appellant requested, he would recuse himself. Again, the Appellant informed the hearing panel that she had no objections to either Ockleberry or Sloan sitting as hearing officers on her appeal.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Appellant was employed by the City of Atlanta (“the City”) in Department of Corrections (“the Department”) as a Booking Clerk (The term “identification tech” was used interchangeably by the witnesses when referring to Appellant and her job functions.)
2. On October 20, 2017, Catina Felker was detained, arrested, and booked into the Atlanta City Detention Center (ACDC) on a Failure To Appear (FTA) warrant signed by Judge Calvin Graves.
3. On the FTA warrant, Judge Graves set bond in the amount of \$900.00 and authorized the detainee's release on a self-bond.
4. Appellant was the booking clerk who processed Ms. Felker into the ACDC.
5. Neither the arrest record card (ARCARD) nor the Jail Management System (JMS) were annotated indicating that Ms. Felker was to be released on a self-bond.
6. On October 24, 2017, Shadorian South was detained, arrested, and booked into the ACDC on an FTA warrant signed by Judge Calvin Graves.
7. On the FTA warrant Judge Graves set bond in the amount of \$900.00 and authorized the detainee's release on a self-bond.
8. Appellant was the booking clerk who processed Ms. South into the ACDC.
9. Neither the arrest record card (ARCARD) nor the Jail Management System (JMS) were annotated indicating that Ms. South was to be released on a self-bond.

DISCUSSION

Department of Corrections Work Rule 2.36(a) provides: An employee will maintain sufficient competency to perform his/her duties and assume the responsibility of his/her position. Employees will perform their duties in the manner which will tend to establish and maintain the highest standards of efficiency in carrying out the functions and objectives of the department.

According to all the witnesses who testified, it is the responsibility of the booking clerk/identification tech to enter onto the ARCARD and into the JMS all pertinent information as it pertains to all persons arrested and brought to the ACDC. Their testimony

only differed as it related to the specificity of information required regarding the entry of bond information.

Captain Marnita Travis, Day Watch Commander, testified that when a detainee is arrested on an FTA warrant it is the responsibility of the booking clerk to enter onto the ARCARD and into the JMS the bond amount, if any, as specified on the warrant. It is also the responsibility of the booking clerk to enter the fact that the judge in issuing the warrant has authorized the release of the detainee on a self-bond. Upon questioning by the Appellant, Captain Travis testified that in instances where the detainee has appeared in court and while before the judge, the judge authorized the release on a signature bond, it is the responsibility of the "court officer" to annotate the ARCARD and JMS. But in these instances, the information concerning the bond was contained on the FTA warrants upon which the detainees were arrested and should have been entered by the booking clerk.

Similarly, Lieutenant Christy Jones, testified specifically, as to Shadorian South, that the judge's notation on the FTA warrant should have alerted the booking clerk to the necessity of inputting into the systems the fact that the detainee was authorized by the judge to be released on a signature bond. When asked by the Appellant whether it was the responsibility of the court officer to supply the missing bond information, Lieutenant Jones emphatically stated that it is the responsibility of the booking clerk when a detainee is "coming in the backdoor, with a warrant attached saying sign own bond" to enter the information pertaining to the signature bond into the appropriate systems.

Major Natasha Johnson, Facilities Commander for the ACDC, is responsible for the daily operations of both the ACDC and Grady Detention Center. She testified that the failure of the Appellant to enter the bond information onto the ARCARD and into the JMS resulted in both Ms. Felker and Ms. South having to remain in jail when they should have been released. Moreover, Major Johnson testified that paid money to a bonding company to obtain their release. However, the Appellant's failure to indicate that the detainees were authorized to be released on signature bonds was discovered and corrected prior to their release.

The Appellant's witness Cheryl Dowdy testified that she was employed by the Department as a booking clerk from 1987 until she retired in 2018. She testified that she was employed in the same position as the Appellant. When questioned by the Appellant regarding the process generally, for notating a signature bond, Ms. Dowdy testified that the process was to retrieve the paperwork from the court supervisor, but that it was the court supervisor's responsibility for notating that the judge had authorized a signature bond. However, when questioned regarding the process that was to be followed when a person was arrested on an FTA warrant and brought into the ACDC, Ms. Dowdy recollection was less clear, and she intentionally began to engage in obfuscation. She eventually admitted that she does not recall whether it was the responsibility of the booking clerk to enter the bond information or merely enter a notation of "see attached warrant."

After hearing all of the testimony and considering all of the exhibits, the Board concludes, that the Appellant violated Department of Corrections Work Rule 2.36(a) and that the City was justified in this disciplinary action.

ORDER

Accordingly, the Board **AFFIRMS** the discipline imposed by the City against the Appellant and **DENIES** the appeal.

This 11th day of August 2021

Suzanne Ockleberry

Suzanne W. Ockleberry, Chair

Mary Ann Phyll

Mary Ann Phyll

Herman Sloan

Herman L. Sloan, DWB