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City of Plainfield

Press Release

Judge rules for City

Director did not violate Police Chief's Responsibilities act

Plainfield, NJ December 8th, 2008:

In a ruling handed down on Friday December 5th, 2008, Judge Marianne Esposito has ruled that Plainfield's Director of Public Safety, Martin Hellwig did not violate the Police Chief's Responsibilities Act in 2007, when he established a policy to rotate Police Captains.

The suit came about when Director Hellwig established the policy within the Police Division... The policy was borne of a desire to alternately have Captains cross trained in all disciplines within the division, rather than being focused in some limited areas of police work and responsibilities. The policy did not dictate the schedule, nor identify the specific assignments of the captains, but rather simply indicated that a rotation schedule would be established.

Edward Santiago, who was then the Chief of Police, argued that the Directors policy was a violation of the Police Chief's Responsibilities Act. Subsequently, the Union County Chiefs of Police Association filed suit in support of Santiago's position. The Association sought

For Immediate Release 3 p.m. EDT, December 8th, 2008

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Restraints from the court in March 2007 to stall the imposition of the policy. The court then refused and alternately dismissed the Association's complaint, and upheld the City's action.

City's Corporation Counsel, Dan Williamson, stated that "Director Hellwig properly exercised his authority as the Director of Public Safety to institute the policy, so long as his policy did not interfere with the day to day operation of the Plainfield Police Division. The court's judicial review obviously supports our conclusions and findings."