

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 4, 2017

City Manager Issues Statement Regarding Ongoing Arson Investigation

City Manager Teresa Wilson has released a statement regarding the ongoing arson investigation that resulted in a fatality. The investigation is still underway and is being led by the Columbia Police Department and SLED. Earlier this evening, the Columbia Police Department issued a release that included information regarding the status of the investigation and a person of interest who been identified as a firefighter with the Columbia Fire Department.

The statement from City Manager Teresa Wilson is below:

(Beginning of Statement)

"At this time, I have issued a directive to suspend the Columbia firefighter who has been identified as a person of interest in the ongoing arson investigation that is being conducted by the Columbia Police Department and SLED. This action will be effective immediately and the firefighter will be placed on investigatory suspension without pay until further notice. This decision was made after conferring with officials with the Columbia Police Department. Due to the fact that the firefighter has not complied or cooperated with the Columbia Police Department, I made the decision to suspend the employee from active service with the City of Columbia.

It is in the best interest of the city and our citizens for the employee in question to be relieved of his duties until the ongoing arson investigation has been closed. Chief Aubrey D. Jenkins is in full support of this decision; however I have personally issued the directive for the employee to be suspended in order to maintain an appropriate distance between the Columbia Fire Department and the ongoing investigative process."

City Manager Teresa Wilson
City of Columbia

(End of Statement)