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**In the matter of a**

**INVESTIGATION PURSUANT TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT BYLAW NO. 53, 2023**

**COMPLAINT NO. 2025-0025**

**Submitted by Reece Harding**

**Young, Anderson (the "Investigator")**

**December 18, 2025**

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**INVESTIGATION REPORT re File 2025-0025**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. On April 22, 2025, Young, Anderson was retained as an investigator under the City of Kamloops Code of Conduct Bylaw No. 53 (the "Code") in relation to a complaint that was submitted by Mayor Hamer-Jackson. This complaint alleges that Councillor Dale Bass breached the Code when she made certain comments to the media on October 30, 2024.
2. This investigation report is prepared and submitted pursuant to section 4.31 of the Code, as I have determined that Councillor Bass did not breach the Code. I wish to note that, while he was the complainant in this matter, Mayor Hamer-Jackson was largely uncooperative with me and resistant to my efforts to engage with him in this course of my investigation. While this was in no way determined the fate of this complaint, it was unusual conduct by a complainant and slowed the process of resolving the matter. I believe, as described later, that Mayor Hamer-Jackson's attitude toward this complaint was informed by his previous interactions with me in the context of other Code complaints. I confirm that I processed this complaint in the same way that I would process any other complaint, that is, in a genuine effort to follow the facts.

**THE COMPLAINT**

3. The complaint alleges that Councillor Bass breached section 3.11 of the Code when comments that she made to the media were published in an article entitled "Unhappy with City Hall office move, Kamloops Mayor sets up shop at his West Victoria car lot" on October 30, 2024 (the "Article"). A copy of the full Article is at **Attachment A**.

4. The Article quotes Councillor Bass, describing Mayor Hamer-Jackson, as follows:

He bullies and harasses, and staff does not feel safe. We have staff off on medical leave because of his presence... We have an obligation to provide a safe working environment for our staff. That means ensuring the mayor does not have access to staff.

(the "Statement")

5. The complaint alleges that the Statement was broadcast nationwide "with no proof, evidence and facts."

6. Section 3.11 of the Code provides as follows:

3.11 Without limiting the ability of the Member to hold a position on an issue and respectfully express an opinion, a Member must ensure that:

(a) their communications relating to City, Council or Committee business are accurate, and must not issue, or allow to be issued on their behalf, any communication that the Member knows, or ought to have known, is false or misleading;

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(b) they do not misrepresent, undermine, obstruct, or otherwise act contrary to the will of Council in matters relating to City, Council, or Committee business; and

(c) all communications by, and on behalf of a Member, including communications made via social media, are respectful and do not discriminate against, Bully and Harass, or defame any Member, Staff, or Volunteer.

7. The Mayor does not specify in his complaint which subsection of 3.11 he believes was breached. However, given that the complaint alleges Councillor Bass made the Statement without proof, evidence, or facts, I determined on preliminary assessment that Mayor Hamer-Jackson was alleging a breach of subsection 3.11(c), specifically that Councillor Bass' statement was defamatory towards Mayor Hamer-Jackson.

8. On further review of the complaint, it appears that, to the extent that City business is implicated by the Statement, it could also be alleged to breach section 3.11(a). However, whether the complaint is viewed through the lens of section 3.11(a) or (c), it is grounded in an allegation that Councillor Bass made a false statement regarding Mayor Hamer-Jackson's conduct. Mayor Hamer-Jackson alleges that this false statement was a breach of the Code.

9. In this circumstance, I have determined that, prior to any discussion of the legal principles that would govern an interpretation of section 3.11 of the Code, subsection (c) of which incorporates the common law relating to defamation, I must make findings of fact to determine whether the complaint is substantiated.

10. Accordingly, my investigation and this report focus upon a core factual question: what are the facts surrounding the Statement made by Councillor Bass? In essence, I must determine whether the Statement is generally true or false. Upon reviewing the Statement, it can be broken down into three distinct claims about Mayor Hamer-Jackson:

- a) "He bullies and harasses...";
- b) "staff does not feel safe..."; and
- c) The City has "staff on medical leave because of his presence."

11. Once the question of the Statement's factual basis, or lack thereof, is answered, I will review the relevant legal principles as to the interpretation of the Code.

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**INVESTIGATION SUMMARY**

*a. Initial Phases and Interactions with the Mayor*

12. On April 23, 2025, I notified Mayor Hamer-Jackson that I had received his complaint, and on April 24, 2025, I sent him a letter requesting additional information.

13. On April 29, 2025, Mayor Hamer-Jackson sent me an email, stating that he had “notified” me in relation to the additional information. After some initial confusion, it became clear that he had sent me information via text message. I advised Mayor Hamer-Jackson that I would not accept submissions via text message and requested that he resend the information via email to ensure it was sent safely and reliably, and to ease record-keeping. I also offered to interview Mayor Hamer-Jackson virtually.

14. On April 30, 2025, Mayor Hamer-Jackson sent me an email, in which he indicated that he would not resend the information via email.

15. On May 1, 2025, I advised Mayor Hamer-Jackson that I would proceed with conducting my preliminary assessment without the additional information that I sought from him. Mayor Hamer-Jackson replied, alleging that I was biased and in a conflict of interest, and that therefore I could not investigate his complaint.

16. On May 9, 2025, I informed Mayor Hamer-Jackson that I had decided to suspend my investigation into this complaint and would consider in detail his bias allegations. I informed him further that if, as is the standard practice in administrative decision-making, I determined that a reasonable apprehension of bias existed, I would recuse myself from the investigation. I also requested that he provide any further evidence or information in support of his allegations by May 22, 2025.

17. Mayor Hamer-Jackson did not provide any further information or evidence in support of his bias allegations.

18. On May 26, 2025, I sent Mayor Hamer-Jackson a letter informing him that I had determined that I did not have a disqualifying bias, and that I would be reactivating the complaint. This letter is attached as **Attachment B**.

19. On June 4, 2025, I advised Mayor Hamer-Jackson and Councillor Bass that, following a preliminary assessment, I had determined that Mayor Hamer-Jackson’s complaint would proceed to a formal investigation. In particular, I found that, if Councillor Bass had made a false statement to the media, this may constitute a breach of the Code. As required pursuant to section 4.23 of the Code, I also requested that Councillor Bass provide a written response to the complaint, together with any further submissions, by June 17, 2025.

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20. On June 4, 2025, Councillor Bass provided a written response to Mayor Hamer-Jackson's complaint. In her response, Councillor Bass took the position that the Statement was truthful, and therefore not a breach of the Code. She cited several news articles and provided examples of several City staff members who allegedly had taken disability or sick leave due to bullying or harassment from Mayor Hamer-Jackson. She also stated that 12 of 13 WorkSafe complaints related to Mayor Hamer-Jackson "have been confirmed". While this was not the only example to which she pointed, I note that Councillor Bass referred to S.22(1) Personal Information as an example of a staff member who had to take long-term disability leave due to S.22(1) interactions with Mayor Hamer-Jackson. In addition, she told me that the City's Human Resources Department could provide verification of factual circumstances to which she pointed out.

21. On June 10, 2025, in accordance with section 4.24 of the Code, I forwarded Councillor Bass' written response to Mayor Hamer-Jackson and requested that he provide a written response by June 20, 2025. I requested that he provide any proof he may have that the Statement was made "with no proof, evidence and facts."

22. On June 11, 2025, in reply to Councillor Bass' written response, Mayor Hamer-Jackson sent me an email in which he stated that "sworn affidavits from all these people is imperative, including bass [sic].". He went on to state that one senior City staff member, who has since taken medical leave, S.22(1) Personal Information with Mayor Hamer-Jackson, and suggested that another City staff member only complained about him after a conversation with the "HR director" and "a pay increase."

23. Later that day, I responded to Mayor Hamer-Jackson, reiterating my request for evidence in support of his complaint, and advised that if he intended to provide further submissions, he had until June 20, 2025, to do so.

24. In response, Mayor Hamer-Jackson sent an email which stated the following: "Who hired you. The individual please". I advised him that I was hired by the City, not any individual person, and reminded him that I had responded to this inquiry previously on several occasions and that I would not be responding to it further. The Mayor responded by asking how many Code of Conduct complaints I had investigated on behalf of the City, and whether I had access to S.14 Information protected by privilege, S.22(1) Personal Information, an investigation report which has been the subject of or is related to several previous Code of Conduct complaints.

25. On June 12, 2025, Mayor Hamer-Jackson sent another email reiterating his opinion that I am biased and stating that "this could be a human rights violation." He further advised that he believed staff "feared repercussions of measures put in place for frivolous COC complaints".

26. Mayor Hamer-Jackson sent a follow-up email on June 13, 2025, advising that he intended to use "every day up until June 20 24/7 to provide additional evidence". He also stated that he hoped I would "investigate every person councillor bass has mentioned with sworn statements that could be used in a court of law in the future."

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27. On June 17, 2025, Mayor Hamer-Jackson emailed me a link to a news article published the same date, entitled "WorkSafeBC won't confirm investigations into Kamloops mayor." This article is attached as **Attachment C**. The news article states that in response to a freedom of information request, "WorkSafeBC said it is 'unable to confirm or deny the existence' of any investigations related to Mayor Reid Hamer-Jackson," because "revealing the existence of such records would unreasonably invade the personal privacy of third parties." I reviewed this article at the time it was sent to me and found it to be unhelpful and unresponsive.

28. On June 20, 2025, Mayor Hamer-Jackson sent me a copy of a letter that was addressed to Kamloops City Council. This letter is attached as Attachment D. The letter listed several complaints and concerns that the Mayor had in relation to my appointment as the investigator for this complaint. I acknowledged receipt of the letter and advised Mayor Hamer-Jackson that I would continue with my investigation until directed otherwise by the City.

29. In response, Mayor Hamer-Jackson again asked who hired me. He also sent this email to the other City Councillors, the Chief Administrative Officer and the City's external legal counsel.

30. I then sent an email to the City Councillors, the CAO, and the Mayor, in which I explained that I had already addressed the allegations of bias previously during my investigation of this complaint and advised that I would carry on with my investigation unless instructed otherwise by the City. This email is attached as Attachment E.

31. Councillor Bass replied to this email, stating that she did not want the Mayor to "prolong this nonsense with his behaviour" and that his bias complaint has been addressed.

32. Mayor Hamer-Jackson sent an email which said the following: "I can prove you are liar, councillor Bass."

33. On August 20, 2025, I sent the Mayor an email advising him that the City had resolved not to remove me as the investigator on this complaint, despite his bias allegations. I also reiterated that as he was the complainant in this matter, I required his participation to advance my investigation. I noted that he had refused to meet with me to be interviewed and again requested that he participate in the investigation process. Finally, I reminded him that if he did not wish to participate, it remained open to him to withdraw his complaint. I requested a response from him by no later than August 26, 2025. This email is attached as Attachment F.

34. The Mayor responded with a lengthy email in which he repeated his inquiries regarding who was responsible for hiring me at the City, suggested that I was abusing taxpayer dollars, and outlined perceived issues with conclusions that I had made in previous investigations.

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35. In response, I advised Mayor Hamer-Jackson that I took his email to mean that he would not be participating further in my investigation, nor would he be withdrawing his complaint, and that as such I would proceed with my investigation without his assistance.

36. On August 21, 2025, Mayor Hamer-Jackson replied to my email, asking whether I would treat him in the same manner if he were Councillor Bass, suggesting that I forced him to use legal representation in previous Code of Conduct investigations, and again repeating his allegation that I am biased against him.

37. On August 22, 2025, I replied that I would treat all elected officials in the same manner, and that it is my practice to speak with legal counsel when a participant has retained such a representative. I reiterated to the Mayor that he had several options in respect of this matter. I told him that it remained open to him to participate in the investigation and that if he did not, I would conduct the investigation without his participation, or that he could request that his complaint be formally withdrawn.

38. On August 24, 2025, the Mayor asked me who was responsible at the City for adjudicating his bias claim. I reminded him that I was the decision-maker in that respect, and that I had advised him of that fact in the letter I had previously sent him, attached as Attachment B.

39. On August 24, 2025, the Mayor sent me a link to an editorial piece written by Marshall Jones and published on Infonew.ca, entitled "Jonesie: There's indeed a snake at Kamloops City Hall." The piece was regarding Councillor Bill Sarai and, in part, the public discourse relating to him in comparison to Mayor Hamer-Jackson. I deemed this article irrelevant for the purposes of this investigation but make note of it as it was submitted to me by the Mayor prior to the August 26, 2025 deadline for his participation.<sup>1</sup>

40. In summary, and as is shown above, the Mayor as the complainant provided me with next to no information or evidence to substantively support his complaint.

### ***b. The Human Resources and Safety Director***

#### ***i. Summary of Correspondence***

41. As noted above, Councillor Bass told me in her response to the complaint that the City's Human Resources Department could confirm the facts to which she was pointing out to me. Accordingly, I communicated with Jennifer Howatt, the City's Human Resources and Safety Director, on several occasions.

42. Ms. Howatt has advised me that she oversees all WorkSafeBC complaints, investigations for the City, as well as employee investigations related to performance management, bullying and harassment, and safety in her role as the Human Resources and Safety Director. She explained that she has a Human

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<sup>1</sup> The article may be found at the following link: <https://infotel.ca/newsitem/jonesie-theres-indeed-a-snake-at-kamloops-city-hall/it107333>

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Resources Manager and a Safety Manager who manages day-to-day operations, functions, and processes for her department, but that she is aware of major investigations and all bullying and harassment complaints that are submitted pursuant to the City's Bullying and Harassment Policy.

43. On August 13, 2025, I telephoned Ms. Howatt to discuss the complaint and my investigation. I was unable to reach her, so I left her a voicemail, and sent her an email in which I introduced myself as the investigator for this matter and requested her participation in the investigation.

44. On August 26, 2025, I sent Ms. Howatt a letter which outlined the questions I would like to ask her as part of my investigation. *Importantly, I made it clear that all the information I was requesting must pre-date October 30, 2024, the date of the Statement.* The letter scheduled an interview for September 12, 2025, but I also offered to allow her to provide a written response to my questions, as they potentially implicated supporting documentation. This letter is attached as **Attachment G**.

45. On September 8, 2025, Ms. Howatt emailed me requesting additional time to prepare her responses to my inquiries. As a result, I rescheduled our interview for September 22, 2025.

46. On September 19, 2025, Ms. Howatt sent me a written response to my letter of August 26, 2025. Her written response is attached as **Attachment H**.

47. On September 22, 2025, I conducted a brief interview with Ms. Howatt in which we reviewed her written response. Our discussion raised a series of follow-up and clarifying questions regarding the specific dates, individuals, and incidents referred to in Ms. Howatt's written response. On September 29, 2025, I sent Ms. Howatt a second letter, which outlined these questions in greater detail. Ms. Howatt asked that she be given until October 24, 2025, to provide her written response, which I agreed to. My second letter is attached as **Attachment I**.

48. On October 24, 2025, Ms. Howatt advised that she had been unable to compile her written response to my second letter due to other unforeseen circumstances that had arisen in her role as the City's Human Resources and Safety Director, and that she would work to complete her written response as soon as possible.

49. On November 25, 2025, Ms. Howatt sent me her written response to my letter of September 29, 2025. In addition to answering my follow-up questions, her second written response appended lengthy supporting documentary evidence, including WorkSafeBC correspondence, an external investigation report, email correspondence, closed council meeting minutes and resolutions, an internal investigation report, and first aid records. Her second written response is attached as **Attachment J (without appendices given the length)**.

50. In my first letter to Ms. Howatt, I asked whether she knew if the Statement was generally accurate. She stated that in her view, the Statement was accurate. She provided the following details:

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- a) In her first written response, Ms. Howatt stated that she was aware of four WorkSafeBC complaints submitted by City employees related to bullying and harassment allegations against Mayor Hamer-Jackson. In her second written response, Ms. Howatt further explained that these complaints were filed on [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information, [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information, [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information, and [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information, and provided correspondence from WorkSafeBC confirming that complaints had been submitted on those dates.
- b) In her first written response, Ms. Howatt stated that she was aware of other City employees who have felt bullied, harassed, intimidated, badgered, or that they were otherwise subject to inappropriate verbal and written interactions with Mayor Hamer-Jackson, but that they had not filed WorkSafeBC complaints.

51. In my first letter to Ms. Howatt, I broke down the Statement into three discrete claims about Mayor Hamer-Jackson: 1) “He bullies and harasses,...”, 2) “and staff does not feel safe”, and 3) “we have staff on medical leave because of his presence.” I asked Ms. Howatt whether she could provide any specific details regarding the accuracy of each of these claims.

*ii. Evidence regarding “he bullies and harasses”*

52. In my first letter to Ms. Howatt, I asked her for all details regarding whether the statement that Mayor Hamer-Jackson “bullies and harasses,” is accurate. Ms. Howatt stated that three of the four complaints submitted to WorkSafeBC regarding Mayor Hamer-Jackson were accepted, and that each of these complaints implicated bullying and harassing behaviour exhibited by Mayor Hamer-Jackson towards the respective complainants. Ms. Howatt also stated the following:

- a) In her first written response, Ms. Howatt explained that the City’s Human Resources Supervisor later investigated the one WorkSafeBC complaint that was not accepted by WorkSafeBC and concluded that the employee in question was bullied and harassed by Mayor Hamer-Jackson. The internal investigation report concluded that the employee was threatened, intimidated, and humiliated by Mayor Hamer-Jackson.
- b) In her first written response, Ms. Howatt stated that the underlying incident for one of the accepted WorkSafeBC complaints was also investigated by an external investigator between June 17, 2024, and December 11, 2024. She stated that Mayor Hamer-Jackson was provided with multiple opportunities to participate in that investigation, but refused to do so, and that ultimately the external investigator concluded that 12 of the 13 allegations raised in that complaint were substantiated. In her second written response, Ms. Howatt provided me with copies of email correspondence between Mayor Hamer-Jackson and another City employee, which demonstrated that he was informed of this complaint on June 3, 2024. She also explained that while Mayor Hamer-Jackson did not attend the council meeting at which the external investigator’s report was received, he

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was provided with a copy of the resulting closed council resolution, which imposed additional protective measures for City staff against him. Ms. Howatt provided me with a copy of this closed council resolution, which states that an independent investigator had concluded that Mayor Hamer-Jackson bullied and harassed a City employee and “created or contributed to an unsafe, disrespectful and/or toxic work environment on **twelve (12) distinct occasions** between February 21, 2024 and June 11, 2024” (emphasis in original).<sup>2</sup>

- c) In her first written response, Ms. Howatt stated that another City employee was [REDACTED] because of an internal safety investigation regarding an incident between Mayor Hamer-Jackson and Councillor Sarai. In her second written response, Ms. Howatt provided me with a copy of the internal safety investigation report. The internal safety investigation report concluded that the incident between Mayor Hamer-Jackson and Councillor Sarai did not constitute bullying and harassment, but that multiple arguments involving Mayor Hamer-Jackson and other City employees which may meet the definition of bullying and harassment have occurred but gone unreported.
- d) In her second written response, Ms. Howatt provided a redacted copy of closed council meeting minutes relating to a legal update that was provided to Mayor Hamer-Jackson and council respecting “allegations of bullying and harassment of City staff by the Mayor.” The minutes note that “multiple staff, including unionized and exempt staff, had made such allegations against the Mayor.”
- e) In her first written response, Ms. Howatt stated that on August 13, 2024, there was a closed council meeting in which Mayor Hamer-Jackson and council [REDACTED] [REDACTED] regarding Mayor Hamer-Jackson’s bullying and harassing behaviour. She also advised that later on in that meeting, Mayor Hamer-Jackson left the meeting, as council was considering protective measures that had been imposed to shield City employees from his conduct.<sup>3</sup> After Mayor Hamer-Jackson left, Ms. Howatt states that ten separate instances of bullying and harassing behaviour exhibited by Mayor Hamer-Jackson towards City employees that occurred between January 2023 and April 2024 were discussed in the closed council meeting. Ms. Howatt also states that recommendations were put forward to extend the protective measures that were already in place and to relocate Mayor Hamer-Jackson’s office to protect staff.

<sup>2</sup> See Attachment J at Appendix H.

<sup>3</sup> Ms. Howatt notes that Mayor Hamer-Jackson did not formally declare a conflict and recuse himself from the meeting, but did leave, nevertheless.

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53. In response to the claim that “staff does not feel safe” due to Mayor Hamer-Jackson, Ms. Howatt stated in her first written response that she believes that claim to be accurate. She cited the protective measures that have been put in place by council to insulate City employees from direct interactions with Mayor Hamer-Jackson.

54. Ms. Howatt further explained that these protective measures initially restricted Mayor Hamer-Jackson from communicating with specific City employees or from discussing certain topics with City employees, and that over time the protective measures have expanded to prohibit Mayor Hamer-Jackson from directly emailing or contacting all City employees. The protective measures were, at that time, intended to protect certain City employees from being suspended by Mayor Hamer-Jackson, and [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. Ms. Howatt did not cite any specific safety concerns or incidents that have been reported by City employees.

55. In my second letter to Ms. Howatt, I asked her whether she could provide any further detail regarding the nature of the safety concerns or risks that City employees were experiencing prior to the imposition of the protective measures, as well as any documentary evidence she may have of those concerns or risks. In her second written response, Ms. Howatt provided the following:

- a) Ms. Howatt stated that Mayor Hamer-Jackson’s mistreatment of City employees included the following behaviour:
  - i. Name calling;
  - ii. Aggressive, abusive, disrespectful, demeaning, offensive, and insulting conduct;
  - iii. Sending emails questioning staff repeatedly about the same topic;
  - iv. Threatening to suspend or terminate City employees without justification;
  - v. Repeatedly questioning staff’s roles and responsibilities without justification and in an inappropriate manner;
  - vi. Obstruction of City employees’ performance of their duties;
  - vii. Repeatedly breaching privacy by disclosing City employees’ personal information;
  - viii. Publicly criticizing City employees; and
  - ix. Repeatedly requesting City employees provide evidence for Mayor Hamer-Jackson’s personal lawsuits.

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b) Ms. Howatt also provided a more detailed summary of the protective measures that have been put in place by council restricting Mayor Hamer-Jackson's interactions with City employees but did not provide further documentary evidence regarding specific incidents or safety concerns that City employees were alleged to have experienced.

***iv. Evidence regarding "we have staff on medical leave because of his presence"***

56. In my first letter to Ms. Howatt, I asked her whether "we have staff on medical leave because of his presence" was an accurate statement regarding Mayor Hamer-Jackson, and if she could provide any specific information in relation to it.

57. In her first written response, Ms. Howatt stated that at the time Councillor Bass made the Statement, there was one City employee who had been off work since [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information, and another employee who was off work from [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information until [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information, but who had returned to work at the time the Statement was made.

58. In her second written response, Ms. Howatt provided the names of City employees who had taken time off work as a result of the Mayor's conduct and clarified that both of these City employees took medical leaves of absence before October 30, 2024.

c. [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information

59. As noted above, Councillor Bass pointed to S.22(1) Personal Information [REDACTED] as an example of a person who was on medical leave due to the Mayor's conduct. I therefore reached out to [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information to ask for [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information participation in this complaint. [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information agreed, and I interviewed [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information via Zoom on November 13, 2025.

60. [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information confirmed that [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information employee of the City, who had started in [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information. After that, [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information was [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information [REDACTED] noted that [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information was on medical leave.

61. [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information stated that the Mayor had bullied and harassed [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information stated, however, that [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information did feel [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information based on [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information interactions with the Mayor.

62. [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information then detailed several interactions between [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information and Mayor Hamer-Jackson that [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information felt demonstrated [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information view of the bullying and harassment. I need not repeat the details of these interactions, as this is not a bullying and harassment investigation, but note that they included circumstances in which [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information felt that [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information employment was threatened, [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information professional advice ignored, and included one situation in which [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information Mayor [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information [REDACTED]. In relation to the [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information told me that the Mayor [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information [REDACTED].

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63. [§ 22(1) Personal Information] told me that [§ 22(1) Personal Information] deteriorated to the point that seeing the Mayor [§ 22(1) Personal Information] for example, caused [§ 22(1) Personal Information]. This was due both to fear of personal interactions with the Mayor and public attack by the Mayor or his supporters against [§ 22(1) Personal Information] told me that [§ 22(1) Personal Information] was on medical leave [§ 22(1) Personal Information] Mayor's conduct on [§ 22(1) Personal Information] stated that [§ 22(1) Personal Information] interactions with the Mayor [§ 22(1) Personal Information].

### FINDINGS

64. This complaint, as noted above, is fundamentally about whether the Statement that was made by Councillor Bass on October 30, 2024 is true or false. In brief, I have concluded on the evidence provided to me that the Statement was in fact true, and that therefore there is no breach of the Code in this instance.

65. I note that, in respect of all findings made in this report, I have applied a civil standard of proof – the balance of probabilities. This standard, which is the only civil standard of proof in Canadian law, asks the trier of fact to determine whether it is “more likely than not” that an event occurred (see *F.H. v. McDougall*, 2008 SCC 53).

66. I remind the reader that the relevant provision of the Code is as follows:

3.11 Without limiting the ability of the Member to hold a position on an issue and respectfully express an opinion, a Member must ensure that:

(a) their communications relating to City, Council, or Committee business are accurate, and must not issue, or allow to be issued on their behalf, any communication that the Member knows, or ought to have known, is false or misleading;

...

(c) all communications by, and on behalf of a Member, including communications made via social media, are respectful and do not discriminate against, Bully and Harass, or defame any Member, Staff, or Volunteer.

67. From the outset, it has been clear that the Statement can be broken down into three discrete claims about Mayor Hamer-Jackson:

- 1) “he bullies and harasses”;
- 2) “staff does not feel safe”;
- 3) there are “staff off on medical leave because of his presence”.

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68. In my investigation, I have sought to determine whether there is a factual basis for each of these claims to decide whether the Statement is true.

69. However, it is not my role to determine whether the Mayor bullied and harassed City employees or made them unsafe. This is not a bullying and harassment investigation in which Mayor Hamer-Jackson would be the respondent. Rather, it is an investigation into the Statement made by Councillor Bass.

70. Accordingly, the lens through which I analyze the evidence gathered is different than that which I would apply in a bullying and harassment investigation in relation to a specific instance of bullying and harassment. I must determine whether there was a factual basis underpinning the Statement, rather than determine whether bullying and harassment occurred as alleged. As noted earlier in this report, I believe that this question is, fundamentally, what I must answer to determine whether to delve further into section 3.11.

71. In this context, I have determined that the evidence provided by Ms. Howatt and [§ 22(1) Personal Information] is conclusive in relation to all three elements of Councillor Bass' Statement. I also accept that, in her role as a member of City Council, Councillor Bass had real knowledge of the matters to which Ms. Howatt and [§ 22(1) Personal Information] attested at the time she made the Statement. While she may not have had direct knowledge of every single detail in the evidence of Ms. Howatt and [§ 22(1) Personal Information], I note that in Councillor Bass' response to the complaint, she pointed me to [§ 22(1) Personal Information] and Ms. Howatt as witnesses that could corroborate her Statement.<sup>4</sup>

72. Ms. Howatt was a credible and crucial witness, given her role as the Human Resources and Safety Director for the City. She has direct oversight of WorkSafeBC complaints, internal investigations, and other employee investigations, at the City, including matters relating to City employees and bullying, harassment, and safety concerns that they may raise. Given her role and the extensive evidence that she provided, I am satisfied that she is intimately familiar with the factual bases for the Statement.

73. I have already summarized the evidence that Ms. Howatt provided with her second written response. In several instances, there are gaps in that evidentiary record – for example, the correspondence with WorkSafeBC that is attached as appendices A – D in her second written response does not specifically state whether the complainants were bullying. In some cases, the evidence shows that City employees did not experience bullying and harassment from the Mayor, or other safety concerns, in relation to specific incidents that were investigated or reported.

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<sup>4</sup> In reviewing the evidence, I note that Councillor Bass was either aware of or directly involved in many of the complaints, protective measures, and medical leaves of absence referred to therein, including the following: Councillor Bass was present at the closed council meetings described at paragraphs 52(d) and (e) above; she gave evidence in the external investigation that was conducted regarding Mayor Hamer-Jackson; and she was copied on correspondence sent to Mayor Hamer-Jackson regarding the protective measures that council put in place to protect City employees from Mayor Hamer-Jackson.

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74. However, Ms. Howatt was generally able to fill evidentiary gaps with her own knowledge, which I find to be reliable given her role at the City. Moreover, most of the evidence that she provided, both in her personal knowledge and the supporting documentation, shows that all three of the claims that I have identified within the Statement are true.

75. In particular, I found the following evidence from Ms. Howatt to be determinative:

- a) Four WorkSafeBC complaints were submitted against Mayor Hamer-Jackson due to bullying and harassing behaviour. Of those four complaints, three were accepted by WorkSafeBC (see Attachment H, response no. 5; Attachment J, Appendices A – D).
- b) The City conducted an internal safety investigation regarding the incident that culminated in the one WorkSafeBC complaint that was not accepted. The internal safety investigation concluded that Mayor Hamer-Jackson did bully and harass a City employee in that instance (see Attachment H, response no. 5; Attachment J, response no. 3 and Appendix I).
- c) An independent, external, third-party investigator concluded that 12 of 13 bullying and harassment allegations raised by one City employee against Mayor Hamer-Jackson were substantiated (see Attachment H, response no. 5; Attachment J, response no. 2 and Appendix E).
- d) Council [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was referred to 10 distinct instances of Mayor Hamer-Jackson's conduct towards City employees, which were used as examples of bullying and harassing behaviour (see Attachment H, response no. 5).
- e) City employees have been [REDACTED] S.22(1) Personal Information to physically distance them from Mayor Hamer-Jackson and to mitigate the risk of future incidents involving Mayor Hamer-Jackson and City employees (see Attachment H, response no. 5; Attachment J, response no. 3(b)).
- f) Mayor Hamer-Jackson has repeatedly threatened to fire at least one City employee, and suspended another City employee without justification or notice (see Attachment H, response no. 5; Attachment J, response no. 5(a)).
- g) Council has imposed a number of protective measures upon Mayor Hamer-Jackson and reaffirmed or expanded those measures on several occasions, which were intended to insulate City employees from interacting with Mayor Hamer-Jackson. Some of these measures expressly prohibited Mayor Hamer-Jackson from [REDACTED] S.12(3)(a)(b) information considered by Council in Closed Meeting [REDACTED] (see Attachment J, response no. 5(b)).

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h) Two City employees took medical leave as a result of Mayor Hamer-Jackson's conduct towards them (see Attachment H, response no. 4 and 5; Attachment J, response no. 1).

76. Leaving aside Ms. Howatt's evidence, [§22(1) Personal Information] provided additional and more specific details regarding [§22(1) personal experience as a City employee working with, and [§22(1) Personal Information], Mayor Hamer-Jackson.

77. [§22(1)] personally attested to being bullied and harassed by the Mayor and noted that [§22(1)] went on medical leave at least in part due to [§22(1)] interactions with the Mayor. I note this evidence would form, on its own, a basis on which to dismiss the Mayor's complaint. While Councillor Bass' Statement could be interpreted as being framed in the plural – because of the use of the phrase "staff feel unsafe" – I would not be inclined to find a violation of the Code on the basis of such semantics.

78. In the course of my investigation, my primary consideration has been whether there was a factual basis for the Statement, and I am satisfied that is the case on the evidence gathered. In brief, Mayor Hamer-Jackson:

- a) has been found to have bullied and harassed City employees by multiple investigators and agencies;
- b) Council has had to take numerous steps to protect City employees from Mayor Hamer-Jackson's conduct, and
- c) at least two City employees have taken medical leaves of absence that are directly related to Mayor Hamer-Jackson's conduct.

79. I emphasize again that I found both Ms. Howatt and [§22(1) Personal Information] to be forthright and reliable witnesses, whose evidence was not contradicted, because Mayor Hamer-Jackson elected against participating in this matter. I do not, therefore, need to weigh differing accounts of what occurred and do not need to make any credibility findings.

80. I am left, at the end of this matter, somewhat puzzled as to why Mayor Hamer-Jackson filed this complaint. While I do not intend to engage in an analysis as to whether it was frivolous, vexatious, or filed in bad faith as per section 6.5 of the Code, as I do not believe doing so is a good use of time and resources, I wish to note that the Code of Conduct should be taken seriously as a set of ethical guidelines to which Council has agreed to hold itself.

81. And while I understand that Mayor Hamer-Jackson was displeased with Councillor Bass' Statement, in my view he should have been more careful in filing this complaint. He did not cooperate with the investigation in a manner that showed he was willing to stand behind the allegations he made but instead continued to take "pot shots", mostly at me and at certain City employees who he believes

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are hiring me to obtain a desired outcome in relation to these complaints. All in all, his conduct as a complainant was not indicative of an elected official who seriously intended to pursue a complaint.

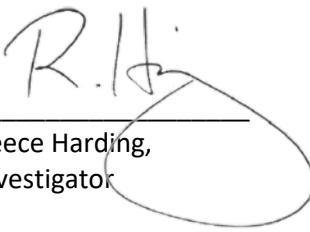
82. I do accept, however, that Mayor Hamer-Jackson may have a knowledge gap regarding the effects his actions have had on individual employees in the City. I understand that the City likely takes steps to protect privacy and confidentiality, when a bullying and harassment complaint is lodged against the Mayor, and that the same goes for WorkSafeBC.

83. However, I also note that Mayor Hamer-Jackson has been directly involved in or made aware of several investigations into his conduct. It seems likely to me that Mayor Hamer-Jackson would be aware, given his involvement in conflicts with **S.22(1) Personal Information**, that S.22(1) Personal Information went on medical leave in part due to interactions between the two of them.

84. Ultimately, while I make no formal finding in this investigation that this complaint was filed contrary to section 6.5 of the Code, I would caution Mayor Hamer-Jackson to consider such allegations more carefully if he intends to trigger the Code's processes again in the future.

85. The complaint is dismissed. I make no recommendations to Council.

All of which is respectfully submitted on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of December 2025 for Council's consideration as per section 4.31(d) of the Code regarding public release.

  
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Reece Harding,  
Investigator