

Long-time Bhisho senior official fired by premier

Premier Phumulo Masualle has fired his longest-serving accounting officer, Bea Hackula, after the superintendent-general in the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs was first served with a letter of suspension in April.



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Premier's office chief of staff Nandi Sikutshwa confirmed Tuesday, 20 December, that Hackula had been fired after a disciplinary hearing.

Some of the allegations levelled against Hackula included that she had flouted procurement processes when she hired an accounting firm to do the Department of Social Development's books.

This was while she was the head of administration at the department.

Hackula was also accused of having extended a tender to the same company in violation of procurement processes.

She is further accused of not taking action following allegations of maladministration in three social upliftment projects.

Time Media has seen the letter of dismissal Masualle sent to Hackula on Monday, headed "Outcome of disciplinary

hearing".

In it, he states that the conclusion was reached by the chairman of the disciplinary hearing "finding you guilty and issuing a sanction of dismissal.

"In line with the above, the department is required to process the termination of service with effect from the date of the sanction."

Hackula confirmed receiving the letter dated 15 December and said she planned to challenge her dismissal.

"Of concern is that it is not explicit as to why I am dismissed."

She said during the internal disciplinary hearing, separate charges were introduced and she had been accused of reappointing a senior manager whose dismissal was ruled unfair by the task team led by Advocate Pretorius Msiwa.

"I am now accused of misconduct for finding a solution when the employee demanded that we clear his name after the report said he was dismissed unfairly.

"As an accounting officer, I had to prevent litigation and a solution was found at no cost to the department.

"What is wrong with that?" Hackula asked.

Another charge she was found guilty of was submitting a late notification of deviation to the Treasury. But Hackula said someone else had been acting department head at that time.

She labelled the hearing a witchhunt, accused the premier of poor leadership and believed he should have engaged directly with her on the issue.

"I am the longest-serving head of department in this province and I have proven myself over and over on my capabilities."

She believed the matter had been dealt with arrogantly and not in too smart a way for a leader at that level.

"I am going to challenge this.

"I did bring this matter to the attention of the Public Service Commission (PSC)," she said.

"I will go back to PSC because I believe it is a structure that has a role of oversight, and thereafter bring it to the attention of the legislature formally."

Hackula said her integrity had been affected and she would hold those involved accountable.

"I will not leave any stone unturned," she said.

Sikutshwa said the premier's office was not in a position to discuss the details of the hearing.

"Ms Hackula was represented and presented her case in front of an independent arbitrator.

"Her dismissal is as a result of that process.

"But, with due respect, we cannot disclose the charges she was found guilty of," Sikutshwa said.

Source: Herald

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