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## **NORTH MIAMI BEACH**

### **Ex-North Miami Beach official was paid \$24,536 to stay home**

**North Miami Beach's former public service director was allowed a three-month paid absence to rework his management style -- before he resigned.**

**BY NADEGE CHARLES**

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North Miami Beach's former director of public services was paid nearly \$25,000 over three months -- and allowed to stay home -- in order to complete what the city manager has called a ``special assignment."

Martin King's homework: Write a report on how to be a better manager.

City Manager Kelvin Baker approved King's three-month absence from his city office after employee complaints that King was combative and disrespectful.

While human resources launched an investigation in February, Baker tasked King to write a report on how to pull his fractured department back together.

King collected close to \$24,536 in pay, in addition to his benefits, in the nearly 11 weeks he worked from his Hollywood home. He resigned last month amid questions about his approval of construction work and materials that were never performed or delivered.

``There were some major disharmonies among him and his employees," said Baker, who described King's task as a ``special assignment." Baker said he needed to separate King from his staff in the public services department, which handles utilities, solid waste and recycling.

Baker said North Miami Beach police are investigating possible wrongdoing by King, but declined to elaborate.

``That's still being reviewed," he said.

A North Miami Beach police spokesman would not comment on the investigation.

King did not return calls for comment.

The employee concerns that spurred King's absence included complaints that King talked loudly about staff problems within earshot of other employees and an administrative assistant's claims that she felt so harassed by King that she developed a skin infection and canker sores.

On the same day King was directed to work from home, he turned in the report Baker had requested -- a three-page document that included his promise ``never to have personal issues reach this level or scale again. . . ."

Baker said King needed to remain at home as the human resources investigation continued, and said King was available to answer questions.

As the city looked into the personnel complaints, officials also began to scrutinize King's dealings with a construction company hired to work on wastewater utilities issues in North Miami Beach.

According to a fax from Assistant City Manager Bernard McGriff to King, the former director admitted he approved purchase orders for W. Jackson and Sons Construction Co. for services and materials that were not performed or delivered.

Representatives from the construction company could not be reached for comment. A phone number listed for the company was not operational, and e-mail messages were bounced back.

A resident of Hollywood, King's tenure with the city spanned more than a decade.

His last months were mired in complaints and questions about his ability to maintain a professional work environment.

In a February human resources investigation obtained by The Miami Herald, North Miami Beach Director of Human Resources Beverly Hobson concluded, ``Martin King needs to work on his management style and interpersonal skills."

Baker indicated King would have returned to work with the demoted title of assistant director of public services.

On May 14, the same day King received a fax from the city notifying him he could be terminated because of his handling of the wastewater procurement process, King resigned.