E. Kingston police chief quits as result of AG’s investigation

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EAST KINGSTON — Police Chief Reid Simpson has resigned following a state investigation into concerns raised after an inmate left alone for hours broke into an evidence room at the police station.

The state Attorney General’s Office announced Wednesday that Simpson had agreed to resign, effective immediately, but would not face criminal charges.

“After thoroughly investigating the inmate trustee issues and overall management of the police department, it has been determined that, while there was substantial mismanagement, lack of proper oversight and improper conduct on behalf of Chief Simpson, his conduct and his actions do not rise to the level of provable criminal conduct. Thus, criminal charges will not be initiated,” the Attorney General’s Office said in a statement.

Simpson agreed to step down and permanently relinquished his certification as a police officer. He also will not seek future employment as an officer.

The announcement came less than a week after East Kingston Selectman Mark Cook told the New Hampshire Union Leader the board was frustrated with the attorney general’s handling of the case, the time it was taking to complete the investigation, and the lack of answers. The investigation was launched in July after the break-in last May.

The findings of the state’s investigation into the incident and other possible mismanagement problems uncovered during the probe were not released.

Rockingham County jail inmate Jarred Brisbois was charged with breaking into the evidence room and stealing heroin that he later brought back to the jail.

The Rockingham County Attorney’s Office claimed Brisbois had been left alone for several hours while performing maintenance work as a trusted inmate through the jail’s trusty program.

Neither Simpson nor Cpl. Mark Iannuccillo were working on the day of the break-in, but they were placed on paid administrative leave last August. Iannuccillo resigned in September; Simpson remained on paid leave until Jan. 1 when the town stopped paying him.

Selectmen declined to release the report on its own internal investigation conducted by Municipal Resources Inc., but said changes were made after the police department’s policies and procedures were examined.

“That incident (involving the inmate) certainly prompted a closer look at the department as a whole and I will say, regardless of that incident, Chief Simpson has done a great job in his position as chief for the town. He was well-respected by the residents and it is definitely a sad day and an unfortunate loss. The town is going to have to recoup and move on," Selectman Matthew Dworman said, adding that selectmen have discussed forming a committee to begin the search for a new chief.

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