Hampstead officer sues to get his name taken off ‘Laurie List’

Officer

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Cheating allegations:

He says the only allegation sustained was possession of an unauthorized study guide at the police academy.

By JASON SCHREIBER

Union Leader Correspondent

A Hampstead police officer is fighting to get his name yanked from the so-called “Laurie List” after he was caught up in a 2017 cheating investigation at the New Hampshire Police Academy.

Bryan Lamontagne has filed suit in Rockingham County Superior Court claiming he was never told that his name was being added and that it attached a “badge of infamy to his name.” The confidential list of police officers with credibility issues is maintained by prosecutors.

The 27-year-old Lamontagne — a fulltime officer in Hampstead — is suing the

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Derry Police Department, his former employer, along with the town of Derry and the state Attorney General’s office.

According to the suit filed through Nashua attorney Timothy J. Goulden, Lamontagne was hired as a Derry police officer on Dec. 11, 2016, and started the police academy on Jan. 2, 2017.

Trouble began when a staffer from the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council questioned him about a “study guide” he was given by a roommate that contained information about test questions on March 17, 2017, the suit said.

Lamontagne claims he was truthful when he answered questions about the guide and reported the incident to Derry police. He was dismissed from the academy on March 21, 2017, and his employment with the Derry Police Department was terminated.

His suit said six other recruits from his academy class were also dismissed for having copies of the guide.
Lamontagne appealed his academy dismissal and was reinstated after a hearing before the council and a settlement agreement was reached.

“The allegations of cheating were withdrawn and the only sustained allegation was possession of the unauthorized ‘study guide,’” the suit said.

Derry Police Chief Edward Garone rescinded his termination and allowed Lamontagne to voluntarily resign on March 29, 2017. Lamontagne was then hired as a full-time officer in Hampstead in October 2017. According to a letter from Garone, Lamontagne’s name was not yet on the “Laurie List: when he was hired in Hampstead.

He was notified that he was on the list through a letter he received on Jan. 5, 2018, from the Derry Police Department.

Lamontagne claims he was never given a chance to have a meeting to “present specific facts or evidence to demonstrate that the incident did not constitute (Laurie List) material,” the suit said.

Lamontagne’s lawyer sent a letter to Garone on March 12, 2018, requesting that his name be removed, but he refused to take it off.

“The decision to be placed on the (list) rests with the Attorney General. Any claims of violation of due process do not lie with this agency,” Garone wrote in a response.

Garone was unavailable for comment Tuesday.

Lamontagne’s lawyer then sent a letter to the Attorney General’s Office seeking removal.

In her response, Senior Assistant Attorney General Lisa Wolford wrote that under Police Standards and Training Council rules, “possession of unauthorized study material in itself constitutes ‘cheating’ … Thus, I cannot conclude that the settlement agreement is proof that the finding which resulted in Officer Lamontagne’s inclusion on the (list) has been overturned. The AGO accordingly cannot cause the removal of Officer Lamontagne’s name from the (list).”

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