

For Immediate Release

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Official Statement

Issued by Mike Merrill, Hillsborough County Administrator

Subject: Fire Personnel Placed on Administrative Leave and Disciplinary Hearing Notice

Hillsborough County, Fla. (July 23, 2018) – Hillsborough County has suspended four Fire Rescue personnel pending the review of an incident that occurred on July 4, 2018. Lt. John “Mike” Morris, 36; Fire Medic Justin Sweeney, 36; Fire Medic Andrew J. Martin, 28; and Acting Lt. Cortney Barton, 38, were notified of their immediate administrative leave with pay on Friday, July 20.

On or about July 11, 2018, the Human Resources Department was made aware of a rescue incident that occurred on July 4, 2018. The incident involved a call where rescue personnel were responding to a request for medical assistance for a 30-year-old female who was coded by dispatch as “Stroke (CVA)/ Transient Ischemic Attack (TIA)” and included that the patient “Passed out and recently had a C-section the other day, lip swollen and drooling.”

Based on the facts and statements obtained during the review of this incident by Human Resources, the information indicates that the four Fire Rescue personnel did not perform their duties. The review indicates several Hillsborough County Fire Rescue Standard Operating Procedures were violated during this incident.

The four employees will be provided Pre-disciplinary packets today, Monday, July 23. The Pre-disciplinary Hearing will take place on Tuesday, July 31, at the earliest. These packets will be available to the media immediately following delivery to the employees. As final employment decisions will not be made until the Pre-disciplinary Hearing, the County is limited in the questions we may answer.

Public safety remains the number one priority of Hillsborough County and Hillsborough County Fire Rescue.

Background:

Employee tenure with the department is as follows: Morris, hired 3/26/2012; Sweeney, hired 3/11/2013; Martin, hired 3/11/2013; and Barton, hired 3/30/2009.

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