

JUDY ROGERS: SEVERANCE 'NOT UNUSUAL,' HR CONSULTANT SAYS

## City paid \$572,000 to let manager go

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VANCOUVER -- Vancouver's new council agreed to pay the city manager it abruptly replaced last December a severance of about \$572,000, according to documents obtained through freedom of information by The Globe and Mail.

That represents about 19 months worth of Judy Rogers's \$300,000-a-year salary - less than the amounts rumoured since the Vision council replaced Ms. Rogers with former deputy health minister Penny Ballem. The city's freedom-of-information office released the amount of the severance but not non-monetary terms and conditions. However, sources say it contains provisions that stipulate what the two parties can and can't say about each other.

The \$571,788 severance, which was approved at a closed meeting Dec. 12 just before Ms. Rogers's replacement was announced, represents all the money owing to her, including banked time.

That's a fairly standard payout for a senior executive who is being terminated without cause, a human-resources consultant says.

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"On the face of it, it may sound like a lot of money. But it's not unusual at all," said Andreas Hesse, of Clear HR Consulting in Vancouver.

"If she got less, she certainly would have had a case to go to the legal system. So when people are let go, this is what employers need to consider."

Mr. Hesse said if cases like that come before the court, judges look at the person's position in the organization, her age, her years of service and her salary in deciding on the right level of severance. Ms. Rogers was essentially the CEO with long service at the city - 20 years, including 10 as city manager - and an unblemished record. Those are all indicators that she would have a strong legal claim to the standard severance of one month for every year of service.

Vision Vancouver Councillor Geoff Meggs defended Ms. Rogers's termination, saying it was important for the newly elected council to be able to set a new direction with a different leader.

Mr. Meggs said that although Ms. Rogers was an "absolute professional" who deserved "enormous respect," she had put her stamp on the organization and the new council needed to be able to alter that.

"Any time in the life of an organization, sometimes it needs new leadership," Mr. Meggs said.

He noted that Dr. Ballem has already saved the city \$90-million through the renegotiation of financing for the Olympic village.

Dr. Ballem has a contract with a base salary for 2009 of \$303,958, marginally lower than the \$309,144 Ms. Rogers would have been entitled to for the year.

Opposition Councillor Suzanne Anton, with the Non-Partisan Association, said it's a waste of taxpayer money to have fired Ms. Rogers just to set a new direction.

"You can do that without treating someone in an undignified way and without costing a lot of money. That amount was completely avoidable."

Ms. Rogers was replaced five days after the new Vision council and Mayor Gregor Robertson were sworn in.

Until 2004, she made about \$200,000 a year, which was about double the mayor's salary. However, former mayor Larry Campbell initiated a motion to increase the salaries of senior managers by 30 per cent. That pushed Ms. Rogers's salary up to \$270,000 the next year. In the most recent year available in city statistics, she made \$292,066, along with spending about \$17,000 on conferences, courses and training.

The mayor that year, Sam Sullivan, got paid \$119,000. Ms. Rogers's salary was at least a 50 per cent higher than any other senior manager.

In 2007, the highest paid city staff included the head of the engineering department, Tom Timm, at \$208,235; the general manager of Olympic operations, Dave Rudberg, who has since announced his retirement, at \$206,466; the head of the legal department, Francie Connell, at \$206,444; and the head of the community services department, Jacquie Forbes-Roberts, at \$206,501. The head of the finance department who resigned last fall, Estelle Lo, had made about \$198,000 that year, and the head of parks operation, Susan Mundick, made about \$197,000.

It's assumed that Ms. Rogers did not have a lot of banked vacation time or unused sick days, as she cashed those out in 2006, resulting in an approximate \$30,000 bump in her salary at the time.

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