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## Fired Suffolk police officer files suit to get job back

By DAVE FORSTER, The Virginian-Pilot

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SUFFOLK - A police officer who was fired in 2005 filed a lawsuit Tuesday to get his job back, citing frustration over a city grievance process his attorney said is worthless.

The case illustrates how the city can ignore decisions by the three-member panels designed to independently review employee grievance claims, said Moody Stallings Jr., the attorney who brought the case for former Officer David Jenkins.

"Every city employee is affected by this," Stallings said. "It invalidates the whole purpose of the Suffolk grievance process."

Raymond Hogge Jr., the attorney who handled the case for the city, said through an assistant that he could not comment because he had not seen the lawsuit, which was filed in Circuit Court.

The Police Department fired Jenkins after he deposited a \$4,687.90 check for the department into his personal account, according to his lawsuit.

The check, from the Virginia Supreme Court, was made payable to "David Jenkins Suffolk Police Department," the complaint says.

The money was to reimburse the city for transporting an inmate from Texas, a trip that Jenkins and another officer handled. Jenkins said he thought the check was a state refund for overpaying child support and that he called the state once he suspected he was mistaken.

At issue now is how the city handled the decision by a grievance panel that heard Jenkins' claim after he was fired.

The panel ruled 2-1 last month that Jenkins, a Suffolk police officer for 11 years, should be suspended without pay or benefits for six months - but not fired.

The city asked the panel to reconsider its decision, but the panel denied that request.

Meanwhile, the city also had appealed to its director of human resources, Yvonne Manning.

Manning has not responded to the Feb. 26 appeal, Stallings said. Her office referred questions to city spokesman Dennis Craff, who said he was unable to respond late Tuesday.

Stallings said that by giving the final word to the human resources director, the city is appealing to the "very people who fired him in the first place."

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