

## Town, Saugerties Police Chief Reach Settlement

The town and Police Chief Gregory Hulbert have reached a settlement of their legal differences, with the chief agreeing to retire.

The Town Board agreed to the settlement during a meeting Wednesday night and issued a joint press release with Hulbert announcing Hulbert would be retiring after "30 years of dedicated and faithful service for the town and its residents." According to the release, the chief is retiring for personal reasons to spend more time with his family. The chief, based on his tenure with the town, will be receiving a pension close to the salary he would have received if working full-time, the release said.

"The parties have also reached an agreement on all issues involving the chief, including his intention to sue the town," the release said. "All parties are satisfied with the final resolution."

The details of the agreement between the town and Hulbert were not immediately available. The Freeman has submitted a Freedom of Information Law request for the document.

Attorney Mathew Tully, who represented Hulbert on behalf of the state Police Chiefs Benevolent Association Defense Fund, said he could not discuss the terms of the settlement. He did, however, say Hulbert was satisfied and will retire July 1.

"He's a very happy camper," Tully said of Hulbert. "He's very happy that this matter was concluded on very favorable terms to him."

The settlement concludes issues that arose after Hulbert was placed on administrative leave by the town on Jan. 11. The chief later filed a notice of claim against the town, Town Board and town Supervisor Gregory Helsmoortel over claims of defamation. No reasons have publicly been given as to why Hulbert was placed on administrative leave. The claims of defamation arose in part because the leave was initially referred to as a suspension.

"The parties also wish to clarify that the chief was not previously suspended," the town and Hulbert's joint press release said, "that he was not subject to disciplinary charges and that he was not forced to retire. The Town Board would like to thank the chief for his 30 years of dedicated service to the town and wish him and his family well in all their future endeavors."

The release also said the chief has indicated he would like to continue his police career on a part-time basis "assisting other police departments in moving in the same direction as he led the Saugerties Police Department."

When he was originally placed on paid administrative leave, Hulbert said he thought it might be related to an incident on Jan. 9 in which town Police Officer John Mullen was maced and punched in the face by a driver he had stopped for lacking license plates. When Mullen drew his weapon, according to police, the suspect took off toward the Greene County Line. Mullen was not seriously injured, according to police. No arrests have been made in that case.

Hulbert was not on duty and was not scheduled to work at the time of the incident. In addition to the chief, Sgt. John Scheffel was placed on paid administrative leave.

