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DORAL

Carollo settles with city; comes back as manager for half day

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Former Doral City Manager Joe Carollo returned to his post as top administrator Wednesday, only to resign a few hours later.

The ousted city manager was reinstated in his job Wednesday morning, then he handed in a resignation letter in the afternoon. The move was part of a settlement under which he was given his job back for a day on the condition that he would resign. He will also be paid \$50,000.

"The fact that they reinstated me for a day, the fact that they accepted a retroactive letter of resignation when three of the council members conspired to fire me, says it all," Carollo, the former mayor of Miami once known as "Crazy Joe," told the Miami Herald. "No city would do that unless they knew they lost. This is what I wanted, and this is what I got."

Carollo, 61, was fired in 2014 by the Doral City Council after he had held the job for 15 months. He said he was terminated in retaliation for reporting corruption and campaign finance violations by former mayor Luigi Boria and two council members, Sandra Ruiz and Christine Fraga.

He later filed a lawsuit against the three, claiming that his termination violated his First Amendment free speech rights and Florida whistle-blower laws.

With about a dozen cameras rolling, Carollo walked into city hall Wednesday afternoon with his wife to hand in a resignation letter dated April 28, 2014. It will be recorded and placed in his personnel file.

"This proves I was not fired but that I resigned," Carollo said. His letter was stamped, copied and filed at the city clerk's office after Carollo spoke

various media outlets.

The city of Doral would not comment on the specifics of the settlement or whether Carollo could have made administrative decisions during his brief reinstatement (he didn't).

Maggie Santos, city spokeswoman, provided a written statement: "The settlement documents speak for themselves. The City is pleased that this dispute has been resolved and we can continue to move forward with city business, always working in the best interest of the Doral community."



Carollo

Late last year, U.S. District Judge Ursula Ungaro ruled that, in regard to the First Amendment violations, Carollo was acting not as a public employee but rather as a private citizen and allowed the case to move forward.

Boria, Fraga and Ruiz all appealed. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit ruled in favor of Carollo, allowing the case to proceed at the trial court level.

"The appellate court ruled in favor of protecting public employees' First Amendment rights when reporting information and corruption as whistle-blowers," said Carollo's attorney, Diana Fitzgerald. "It wasn't about the money for Joe, it was about the principle."

According to the settlement agreement, Carollo will be paid \$50,000.

If the parties hadn't settled, the trial would have taken place late this year or early next year.