

Chance Curbow
Milledgeville Fire Chief Charged with Simple Battery

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation, or GBI, recently completed an investigation on Milledgeville Fire Chief William Collier. Following the investigation, the GBI placed a warrant out for Colliers' arrest on the morning of Nov. 29.

Collier has been arrested and charged with one count of simple battery following an incident that took place at Baldwin County High School gymnasium, where a charity basketball game was taking place. The incident occurred between Collier and a former firefighter, Willie Tennyson, on Oct. 22.

According to Baldwin County Jail records, Collier was booked into a cell at 11:46 a.m. on Nov. 29 after being allowed to turn himself in.

The Milledgeville Police Department requested assistance from the GBI on Oct. 25 and when they made the decision to arrest Collier, he was booked into the Baldwin County Jail.

Tennyson had resigned from the fire department earlier this year but was at the gymnasium wearing the same shirt that active fire department personnel were given to wear during the event while they participated.

"It's really weird that someone would show up and try and participate in a job they recently quit," said Sairsha Connor, a sophomore mass communications major. "I don't think the Fire Chief was right to grab the shirt off another man, but I do understand frustration with someone posing as a member of his team."

There has been a probable cause hearing for Collier's case. Neither Collier nor his attorney attended the hearing, but GBI Special Agent Zachary Plock presented the findings of the GBI investigation.

"It's pretty baffling that someone in this type of position of power thinks they can do whatever they want without any repercussions," said Dylan Almond, a sophomore computer science major. "He probably thought since he is the fire chief nothing would happen."

Reportedly, Collier took the shirt off Tennyson's back and it was confirmed in the investigation that Collier "did intentionally make physical contact of an insulting and provocative nature with Willie Tennyson."

Milledgeville City Manager Hank Griffith said he will be in touch with Mayor Mary Parham-Copelan, city attorney Jimmy Jordan, and city alder members about a city council meeting regarding the incident.

"I think he should get fired," said Andrew Dozier, a junior music major. "As a public figure in Milledgeville he can't act like he did or let anger get the best of him. I am not sure what their

personal relationship might be but there are definitely better ways that he [Chief Collier] could have gone about this whole thing.”

No information has been released about a possible sentence length, but Collier is still being held as the investigation continues. His reported \$500 bail has not been paid and that payment may only become a possibility once the investigation is no longer active.

Any information about the incident is encouraged to be submitted to the proper authorities, the GBI Regional Investigative Office in Milledgeville can be reached at 478-445-4173 or any anonymous tips can also be submitted by calling 1-800-597-TIPS (8477).