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THE CITY WITH SPIRIT

Griggs cleared in first charge

Bradley case next in court

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Jeff Griggs

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— JAMES LOGAN

TONY EUBANK Banner Staff Writer

ATHENS — Cleveland Police Department crime scene technician Jeffrey Griggs was cleared of domestic abuse charges in a Wednesday afternoon hearing in McMinn County General Sessions Court.

Cleveland attorney James Logan, who represented Griggs, filed a motion before Judge R. Wylie Richardson to have the charges against his client dismissed. In the same courtroom, Assistant District Attorney General Andrew Watts filed a motion seeking to revoke Griggs' bail on the grounds that the defendant had violated an order of protection issued in Bradley County.

Griggs had previously been arrested twice in one week.

The first arrest, by the McMinn County Sheriff's Office, came on a domestic violence charge that stemmed from an incident in Calhoun where Griggs alleged that he observed his wife, Cindy Griggs, and former Cleveland Police Department Chief Dennis Maddux kissing.

It was at this point that Griggs reportedly began taking photos of the two until his wife tried to grab the camera in an attempt to retrieve the memory card, resulting in a physical altercation that ultimately led to

Griggs' arrest. Griggs was picked up by Bradley County deputies the following day, after being found in violation of an order of protection that was issued as a result of the first arrest.

Logan began his argument Wednesday by contending Cindy Griggs, who was present at the hearing, not only initiated the physical altercation but also declined to press charges. Logan continued to argue, stating that not only was there not any conclusive evidence that Griggs committed any crime, but also alleging Cindy Griggs essentially admitted to committing three crimes herself in the course of the alleged domestic dispute.

Logan claimed that too much of what is stated in the affidavit could be considered hearsay. He also questioned whether there was probable cause for the arrest.

The DA's prosecutor kept his argument brief, claiming probable cause was established and the elements of domestic abuse are hard to ignore.

Richardson concluded that while there was probable cause for the arrest, there is not enough corroborating evidence to allow the court to pursue the charge any further, and ruled to dismiss the charge.

“We are pleased that the judge followed the law,” Logan said afterward on his client's behalf. “This is a tragedy for all of us.”

Logan added he hopes the people involved, the city of Cleveland, and the Cleveland Police Department can move on from this incident and begin a much-needed healing process.

Although the McMinn County judge dropped the domestic violence charge, Griggs must still face the Bradley County court after being charged with contempt for violating the order of protection. Griggs is currently out on a \$1,500 bond.

Watts, representing the 10th Judicial District office, said he could not comment on the case as there are still multiple ongoing investigations involving the Cleveland Police Department.

Various agencies are involved in current investigations surrounding the Cleveland Police Department case, including the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, both the Bradley and McMinn County sheriff's offices, and the city of Cleveland. The DA's Office is leading the multiple inquiries under the supervision of DA Steve Crump.

On Monday, the Cleveland City Council hired former TBI Director Larry Wallace to serve as a consultant in a thorough review of Cleveland Police Department policies and procedures. Wallace is serving on a three-member committee, along with Cleveland City Manager Janice Casteel and Cleveland City Councilman Dale Hughes.