

# CITY MANAGER CHARGED IN ASSAULT

*Petersburg leader due in court today on domestic battery*

BY F.M. WIGGINS  
STAFF WRITER

PETERSBURG — City Manager William E. Johnson III is facing a charge of assault and battery of a family member following a weekend complaint that claims he punched his wife in the nose and threw her on the floor, according to court records. In addition to the misdemeanor

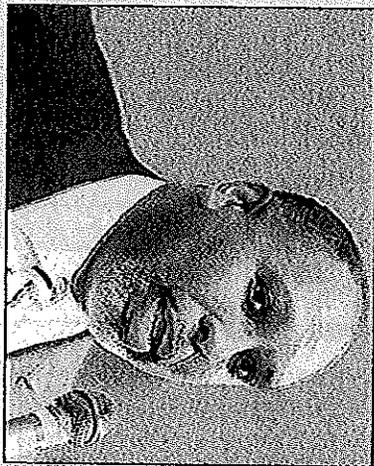
criminal charge, Johnson's wife — Gloria Wright Johnson — was granted an emergency protective order from a magistrate. Johnson is set to appear in court this morning for a first court appearance on the matter. Johnson was in a meeting and not available for comment yesterday afternoon.

The charge stems from an alleged dispute that began Saturday morn-

ing and ended in the overnight hours early Sunday morning. The criminal complaint filed by his wife gives a detailed account of the incident in her own handwriting.

She claims that the culmination of the incident was when he said he would give her a reason to call police. He then allegedly punched her

*Please see JOHNSON, Page A6*



Petersburg City Manager William E. Johnson III speaks at the Petersburg Chamber of Commerce annual dinner on Thursday night.

PATRICK KANE/  
PROGRESS-INDEX  
FILE PHOTO

# JOHNSON

Continued from Page A1

in the nose, grabbed her hair, threw her to the floor and punched her again, according to the criminal complaint in Petersburg Juvenile, Domestic Relations Court.

The incident began when Gloria Johnson sent a text message to her husband around 10 a.m. Saturday saying she felt that he was having too much communication between his phone number and another phone number, according to court records.

About 40 minutes later, the city manager came home and talked to his wife for about an hour saying that he was not cheating on her, before leaving around 11:30 a.m. Around 1 p.m. though, according to the complaint, he called her back upset, demanding that she leave the house.

When Johnson came home around 1:43 a.m. Sunday, he entered the bedroom and began arguing with his wife until around 3:30. "At this point the whole house was awakened," Gloria Johnson wrote in the complaint. "My sister-in-law tried numerous times to calm William down, to no avail."

Someone called police, and when police arrived, the couple each explained their side of the story.

"I advised the police that all I wanted to do was get my things and leave," Gloria Johnson wrote in the complaint.

At that point, William Johnson apparently left the couple's Walnut Hill neighborhood home and the police also left. Once police were gone, according to the complaint, the city manager returned and yelled at

his wife. "I told William if he doesn't leave, I will call the police back. William told me to hurry up and get my" belongings out of the house, Gloria Johnson wrote in the complaint.

She goes on to say that she called police again, but William Johnson left and she called police to tell them to disregard the call. As she once again began to pack, he allegedly returned again and told his wife that she was taking too long.

"I told William to leave me alone, that I was moving as fast as I can," she wrote. Gloria Johnson then claimed her husband responded that he would give her a reason to call police. At that point, according to the complaint, William Johnson walked over to his wife and punched her in the nose before grabbing her hair and thrusting her head to the floor. While on the floor, he allegedly punched her at least one more time.

The courts issued an emergency protective order to Gloria Johnson on Sunday at 8:53 a.m., that expired at 11:59 p.m. Tuesday. Johnson was served the warrant of arrest at 9:02 a.m. Sunday, according to the warrant.

Petersburg City Council issued a statement Tuesday saying City Council is aware of the situation facing William Johnson. Council has not met to discuss the issue. The next regular City Council meeting is scheduled for Feb. 28 at 7:30 p.m. at Union Station on River Street in Petersburg.

"Until such time as City Council does meet, Mr. Johnson will continue to work as City Manager of Petersburg," the statement says. "The matter has been referred to Petersburg's Acting City Attorney, Wil-

liam Hefty."

Johnson was the keynote speaker last week at the Petersburg Chamber of Commerce's annual dinner, an event that was also attended by his wife.

Johnson, 49, was hired last year and started working for the city on July 25. In June 2011, Mayor Brian Moore said that Johnson was selected from a field of more than 60 candidates for the position. Moore said that Springsted, the consultant firm that had worked with the city to find a new city manager, helped to narrow the field.

"[Johnson] really jumped out to council because of his emphasis and experience with economic development and his ties to the region," Moore said last year.

Johnson, whose salary is \$156,500, said in June 2011 he was a hard worker and expected the same for other city employees. He also said he wanted a "clean" city.

Johnson has previously served as a deputy city manager in Richmond, county administrator, deputy county administrator and director of finance in Prince George County, director of finance in Louisa County and accounting and budget director in New Kent County.

He has served as a city manager for College Park, Ga., before returning for two years to serve as a deputy county administrator for Chesterfield County for two years and then returning to serve as city manager in College Park where he was hired to the Petersburg city manager position from.

• F.M. Wiggins may be reached at 804-732-3456, ext. 3254 or fwiggins@progress-index.com.