

Council keeps out molester

Judge recommends monitoring program for E. Bangor man.

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The Express-Times**

E. BANGOR -- Borough council voted unanimously Tuesday night to not reinstate former maintenance worker and admitted sex offender John Hanna, said borough Secretary Bonnie Due.

Hanna, 55, of the 100 block of Gum Street, was suspended without pay in August 2002. He had pleaded guilty to corruption of a minor after he was accused of fondling an 11-year-old girl on Oct. 13, 2000, when he was 52 years old.

The borough hired Hanna as a maintenance worker in January 2001.

Council President James Patrick on Tuesday deferred all questions about Hanna to borough Solicitor David Ceraul. Ceraul could not immediately be reached for comment.

Because Hanna admits he had sexual contact with the child, he may be eligible for an intensive house arrest program, a judge said Tuesday.

Hanna was sentenced to six months to two years in prison, but was paroled before he served four months because he had a heart attack in prison, according to Northampton County Judge Jack A. Panella.

But Hanna was sent back to prison because he was unwilling to be open with counselors, to talk about his sexual desires and to discuss what happened with the victim, according to probation officer Jermaine Greene.

Initially, Hanna was only willing to admit he made lewd comments to the girl and put his hand in her lap. After being sent back to prison, however, he admitted to molesting the girl, Greene said.

Greene recommended that Hanna be placed on house arrest for six months with the county's new global positioning system equipment.

Under the program, Hanna would be required to wear an ankle bracelet and to carry a purse-sized transmitter that would allow the probation department to constantly track Hanna's whereabouts. The new equipment has been in use by the county since January.

The probation department can set up "hot zones" to alert probation officers if Hanna comes near sensitive places, such as schools or the home of the victim.

Panella said he will consider whether to allow Hanna to take advantage of the global positioning program as soon as the probation department tells him specifically what "hot zones" would be set up.

Panella said Hanna must pay for the program up front before he will

approve it. The cost is \$10 a day, which means Hanna would have to pay \$1,800 for six months.

Hanna said nothing at Tuesday's hearing except that he would comply with the terms of the global positioning system if Panella approves.

Panella said he could tell that Hanna was disappointed Panella didn't immediately approve Hanna's entrance into the program and that Hanna didn't take his crime seriously.

"I can tell by your expression you don't agree with my position," Panella said. "You impeded the progress of your counselors. These children never recover. This child will remember for the rest her life her interaction with you."