**Beavers to make decision in police shooting Attorney for Autumn Steele's son doubts county attorney's fairness.**

**By ANDY HOFFMAN ahoffman@thehawkeye.com**

An attorney representing the 7­year­old son of a woman fatally shot by a Burlington police officer said Friday he doubts Des Moines County Attorney Amy Beavers has the "judgment, competence and integrity to fairly and fully investigate" the officer's actions on her own.

Adam Klein, an Atlanta, Ga., attorney, told The Hawk Eye Friday evening he is concerned about Beavers' decision to rely on her own judgment to determine whether Officer Jesse Hill's actions were justified.

Beavers said Friday afternoon she will make the decision herself whether the fatal shooting of Autumn Steele by Hill was legal.

Her announcement comes less than 24 hours after saying she did not know whether she would ask the Iowa Attorney General's office to review the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation's report on the case before making her final decision.

"I'm going to make the decision myself," she said Friday afternoon. "This is what I was elected to do. It's is my statutory duty to make decisions like this. I do not think I need the attorney general's assistance."

Beavers said before making her decision to resolve the issue herself, she spoke with Klein, who she described as an attorney for Steele's family.

Beavers said Klein indicated he had no concerns about her making the decision on whether Hill's actions were within the law without input from the attorney general's office.

"I talked to him about noon (Friday) and asked him if he had any concerns about me handling the decision myself," she said. "He said he didn't. The only concerns he had was about the dog's situation and when the documents (DCI report) would be released."

However, Klein told The Hawk Eye that was not correct. "

Ms. Beavers seriously misrepresented our conversation," he said. "First, I am not the lawyer for the family of Autumn Steele, nor did I ever claim to be. I represent her 7­year­old son, Kai.

"Autumn's husband, Gabe, and their son, Gunner, and her mother are represented by other lawyers ... Her statement to the press that she spoke to a 'lawyer for the family' is a naked attempt to hide the fact that she broke her promise to discuss the matter with Autumn's family before coming to a decision."

Klein said as a prosecutor Beavers is supposed to carefully review all the evidence, speak with the victim's family and come to the decision whether she or the attorney general is better suited to investigate this case.

"These are among the hardest decisions a prosecutor faces," he said. "She must carefully examine all the evidence, look within herself and decide whether a fresh perspective might better serve the interests of justice. In Ms. Beavers' case, this arduous process took about an hour."

Steele, 34, was shot by Hill outside her residence at 104 S. Garfield Ave. in the mid­morning hours of Jan. 6 during a domestic disturbance with her husband, Gabriel Steele, 35.

Beavers said Thursday she wanted to talk with Gabriel Steele before determining if she would make the decision herself or ask the attorney general's office for assistance.

However, Beavers said Friday she was notified Steele would not meet with her and was referring all questions regarding the case to his attorney, Trent Henkelvig.

Henkelvig could not be reached for comment Friday.

After learning of Steele's decision and talking with Klein, Beavers said she decided to resolve the issue without the attorney general's assistance.

Beavers and Klein have different interpretations of their conversation.

Klein said after reading the story in The Hawk Eye Friday, he contacted Beavers by email "to introduce myself and to find out how far along she was in making her decision" on whether to consult with the attorney general' office.

Klein said he later talked with Beavers by telephone, and she indicated she had received the DCI file but had not reviewed it in detail. Klein said Beavers told him she was "leaning toward dealing with the case herself rather than involving the attorney general's office," but had not yet decided what to do.

"She did not ask my opinion as to whether she should block the Attorney General's investigation, and I did not offer it," he said. "It never once occurred to me that Ms. Beavers would make this decision without even pretending to look at the evidence or reach out to the family. Now, I have decided. And, yes, I do have concerns ...

"This morning I was willing to reserve judgment as to whether Ms. Beavers had the judgment, competence, and integrity to fairly and thoroughly investigate Officer Hill's actions. Now, I am certain she does not."

Beavers said she intends to announce her decision within the next 30 days.

Ed Ranck, a witness to the shooting, said he thought Hill accidentally shot Steele when he was startled by the family's dog.

He said it appeared Hill was attempting to shoot the dog when he slipped in the snow and fell. He fired two shots as he fell, fatally wounding Steele and injuring the dog.

The "situation" Beavers referred to in talking with Klein involves a hearing about the fate of the dog, a German shepherd mix named Sammy. The dog has been impounded at the Des Moines County Humane Society since the day of the shooting.

A hearing has been set for 6:30 p.m. Feb. 25 before Burlington's animal hearing board to determine if the dog is vicious and should be euthanized.

The 31­year­old Hill, who has been on the police department since August 2013, has remained on paid administrative leave since the incident.

The most recent fatal police shooting in southeast Iowa occurred in August when a Fort Madison police officer shot and killed a man during a confrontation inside the man's residence.

That shooting occurred Aug. 3 and the DCI completed its investigation Sept. 14. However, before results were released, Lee County Attorney Mike Short asked the Iowa Attorney General's office to review the findings.

On Sept. 12, after the state attorney general's office submitted its review of the DCI investigation, Short then issued a final report clearing the police officer of any wrongdoing.