

COUNCILMAN'S SUICIDE

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Friday morning involving allegations that Bryan sexually abused his two adopted teenage daughters and a former nanny for the family.

"I don't know when any of these [incidents] supposedly occurred," said Ron Stuart, public information officer for the 6th Judicial Circuit, which comprises Pinellas and Pasco counties.

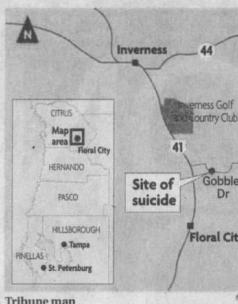
He Was Ordered Out Of Home

At the hearing, a judge told Bryan to move out of his house and stay away from his teen daughters and his wife, Stuart said.

Bryan contends the sexual relations he had with the nanny were consensual and occurred while she was an adult, Stuart said.

Bryan submitted a letter of resignation shortly before 2:30 p.m., City Clerk Eva Andujar said. He did not explain his reason for resigning.

"It is imperative for me to preserve what is of utmost importance to me,



Tribune map

my family," Bryan, 56, wrote in the letter, dated two weeks ago, Aug. 20.

By late afternoon, Bryan's photograph and biography had been removed from the city's Web site. Retired from his own business, Bryan Hornes, the lifelong St. Petersburg resident was elected in 2001 and re-elected in 2005. Bryan's current term runs through Jan. 2, 2010.

City council member Earnest Williams called it "one of the worst days of my life."

"My heart goes out to the family and everyone that's been affected by

this tragedy," Williams said Friday. "I'm certainly baffled by what has transpired today. I just pray that everything will move forward for the family and our community."

In a statement from the city, Mayor Rick Baker said, "My thoughts and prayers are with the Bryan family tonight."

Acting City Council Chairman James Bennett said, "During this time of loss, St. Petersburg's city council extends our deepest sympathy to the Bryan family."

Friend Saw Him Drive Up To House

Seventeen-year-old Chelsea Brockway lived next to the Bryans' weekend retreat for six years and was stunned when told of his death.

"I can't believe it. I loved him. They were like family," Brockway said.

She now lives about a half-mile from the Bryan house and saw him Friday afternoon when he pulled in; she honked her car horn in a greeting.

"They were just here last weekend," she said.

The Bryans' next-door neighbor in St. Petersburg, Nung Bedell, said he and all the neighbors in the Brighton Bay community socialized with the Bryan family during holidays.

"I was shocked" about the allega-

tions of sexual abuse, Bedell said. "I knew there was going to be a divorce. The allegations of the criminal activity, that really shocked me. ... I think he was a great councilman and a good neighbor. For all appearances, he was a great father."

Nung said Bryan was very involved with his kids, his family and the community, and he didn't think Bryan would take his own life. Before he heard the allegations, he thought the main problem was a divorce.

"It seemed to me he was a strong enough person who could handle a divorce."

The Bryan family referred to their house in Floral City as "the lake house," he said.

Reporter Saw Body In Garage

Reporter DeWitt, who works in the St. Petersburg Times' Hernando County office, spotted Bryan through a window when he reached the house.

"When he arrived, he could hear a motor running and he smelled smoke ... coming from the garage and sort of gas fumes," said Brown, the editor.

DeWitt looked in a window and saw a man slumped over what appeared to be a golf cart, Brown said.

DeWitt tried to open the door and

it was locked, so he called 911. Paramedics arrived and broke into the garage, Brown said.

Brown said DeWitt, who covers the environment and water issues, is "doing pretty well. He's cooperating fully with the police. He's a veteran reporter and total pro. ... He reacted well and seems to be fine."

St. Petersburg police were working with the Citrus County Sheriff's Office, and contacted Bryan's wife, Alicia, about his death, the sheriff's office said.

Bryan's body was being taken to Leesburg for an autopsy.

At the news conference, two hours before Bryan was found dead, Mayor Baker said he was "saddened by the news" of Bryan's resignation and offered Bennett, the acting chairman, "my full support."

Bennett said the council will fill Bryan's vacancy within 45 days with a successor who will serve the remainder of Bryan's term.

Reporters Neil Johnson, Ray Reyes and Elaine Silvestrini and researchers Buddy Jaudon and Diane Grey contributed to this report, as did News Channel 8 reporter Samara Sodros. Reporter Carlos Moncada can be reached at cmoncada@tampatrib.com or (727) 823-3412.