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# Helena city manager placed on paid administrative leave





Photo by: MTN News

Commissioners voted 3-0 to put city manager Ana Cortez on leave, pending an outside investigation into a complaint filed against her.

By: Jonathon Ambarian - MTN News

Posted at 1:12 PM, Jan 20, 2020 and last updated 3:12 PM, Jan 20, 2020

**HELENA —** The Helena City Commission has placed city manager Ana Cortez on paid administrative leave, following a special meeting held last week.

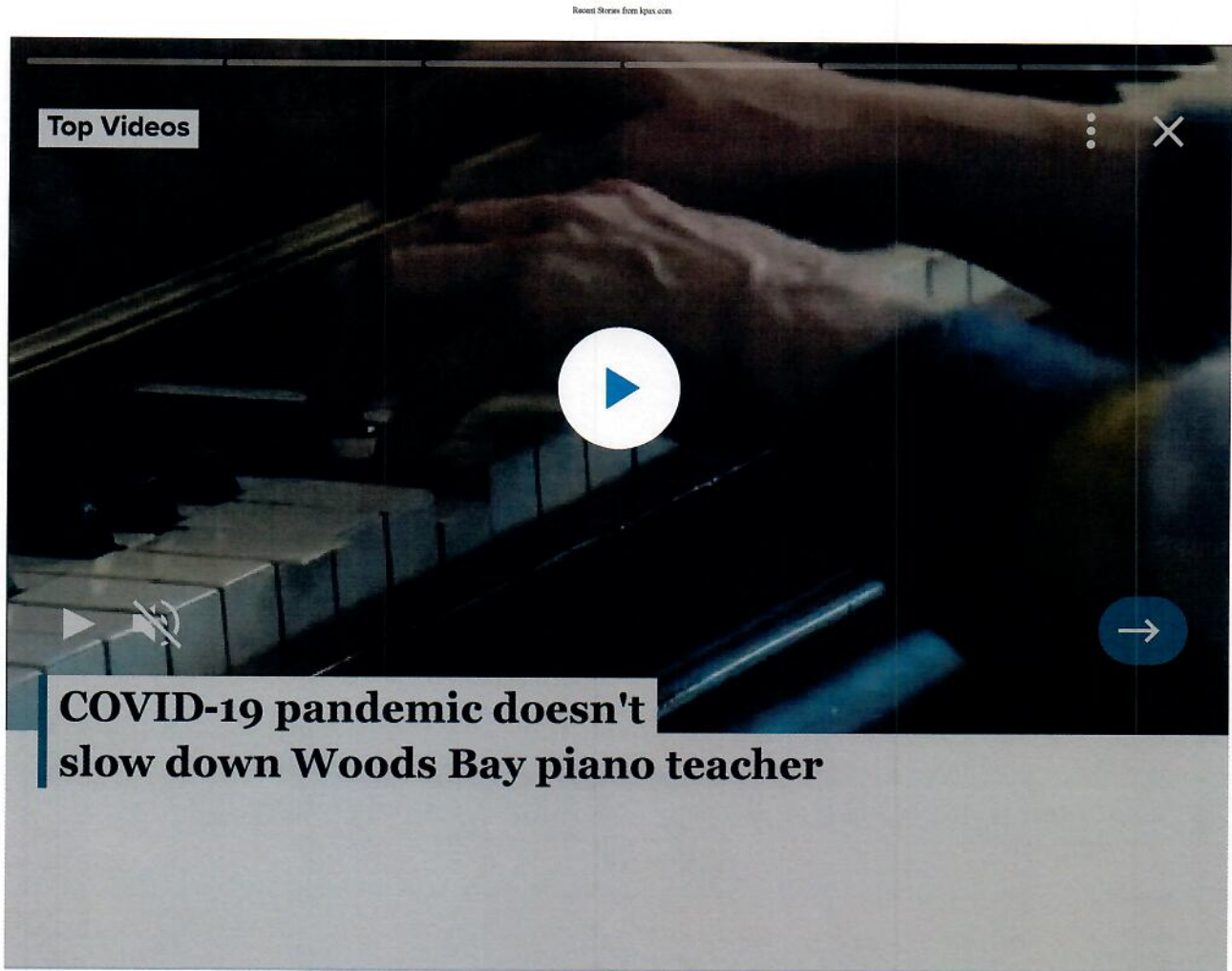
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Commissioners voted 3-0 to put Cortez on leave, pending an outside investigation into a complaint filed against her.

Commissioner Sean Logan abstained from the vote. Mayor Wilmot Collins was traveling and not present for the meeting.

Leaders said this decision was based on policy laid out in the city's personnel policy. They stressed that it is not considered an "adverse employment action" or disciplinary action.



"This comports with past practice, so it makes sense for us to move forward with paid administrative leave while an independent investigation is pending," said Commissioner Andres Haladay.

The city has brought in an outside law firm, Ugrin Alexander Zadick, P.C., of Great Falls.

Jordan Crosby, an attorney with the firm, said city personnel policies

Jordan Crosby, an attorney with the firm, said city personnel policies guarantee that the complaint remain confidential, so no further information about the nature of the complaint can be released.

Crosby said the city retained her firm earlier this week. She said she had contacted another law firm, Kasting, Kauffman and Mersen from Bozeman, about conducting the investigation.

She said there is no estimate of how long the investigation could take, but they hope to conclude it in a timely manner.

The Helena city clerk's office announced this meeting on Wednesday.

Last year, Cortez had faced two complaints from city employees, one claiming harassment and another alleging both harassment and age discrimination.

An outside investigation cleared her of those allegations, saying the evidence showed she did not violate any city policies.

However, it recommended the city work on improving communication between her and staff.

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