



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES  
SUPREME COURT  
Manila

SECOND DIVISION

**NOTICE**

Sirs/Mesdames:

*Please take notice that the Court, Second Division, issued a Resolution dated **October 4, 2023** which reads as follows:*

**A.M. No. 23-08-29-MCTC (DROPPING FROM THE ROLLS OF MS. CHARLOTTE CAROLYN P. EPISTOLA, COURT STENOGRAPHER I, MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT, CABATUAN-LUNA, ISABELA).** — As an administrative matter, the Court resolves the failure of Charlotte Carolyn P. Epistola (Epistola), Court Stenographer I of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court, Cabatuan-Luna, Isabela to submit her Daily Time Records (DTRs); and her absences without approved leave (AWOL).

Per its Report<sup>1</sup> dated August 9, 2023, the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) informed the Court that based on the records on file with the Employee's Leave Division of the Office of the Administrative Services (ELD-OAS), Epistola had not submitted her DTRs since March 2023, neither had she filed her leave applications therefor. Alpha D. Ulep, Clerk of Court II, and Presiding Judge Ma. Anastacia D. Manalang-Labog, both of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court, Cabatuan-Luna, Isabela, issued a certification<sup>2</sup> attesting to this fact.

Too, per verification with the Employee's Welfare and Benefits Division, it was confirmed that Epistola had not filed any application for retirement. The records on file with the Personnel Division reveal that her name still appears in the plantilla of personnel, thus, she is still considered to be in active service. Meantime, the Judicial Integrity Board reported that Epistola has no pending administrative cases against her. Based on the records of the Court Management Office, Epistola is not considered an accountable officer.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Rollo*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 4.

Notably, per OCA Memorandum WSB No. 5A-2023<sup>4</sup> dated May 3, 2023, the salaries and other benefits of Epistola have already been withheld due to her failure to file her DTRs since March 2023.

### **Recommendation of the Office of the Court Administrator**

In the same Report dated August 9, 2023, the OCA recommended that:

- 1) [T]he name of **MS. CHARLOTTE CAROLYN P. EPISTOLA**, Court Stenographer I, Municipal Circuit Trial Court, Cabatuan-Luna, Isabela be **DROPPED FROM THE ROLLS effective March 1, 2023**, for having been continuously absent without official leave (AWOL) for at least thirty (30) working days. However, she is still qualified to receive the benefits she may be entitled to under existing laws, and may still be re-employed in the government;
- 2) [T]he position **Court Stenographer I** in Municipal Circuit Trial Court, Cabatuan-Luna, Isabela, be declared **VACANT**; and
- 3) Ms. Espistola be **INFORMED** of her separation from the service or dropping from the rolls at 5 Juan Dacanay, Purok 4, San Fermin, Cauayan, Isabela, the last known address appearing in her 201 file.<sup>5</sup>

### **Our Ruling**

The Court resolves to adopt and approve the Report and Recommendation dated August 9, 2023 of the OCA.

Section 107, of Rule 20 of the 2017 Rules on Administrative Cases in the Civil Service provides:

- a. Absence Without Approved Leave
  1. An official or employee who is continuously absent without official leave (AWOL) for at least thirty (30) working days may be dropped from the rolls without prior notice which shall take effect immediately.

He/she shall, however, have the right to appeal his/her separation within (15) days from receipt of the notice of separation which must be sent to his/her last known address. x x x

Consequently, Epistola's continuous absence since March 2023 up to the present, totaling more than 30 working days, warrants her name to be dropped from the rolls.

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 2.

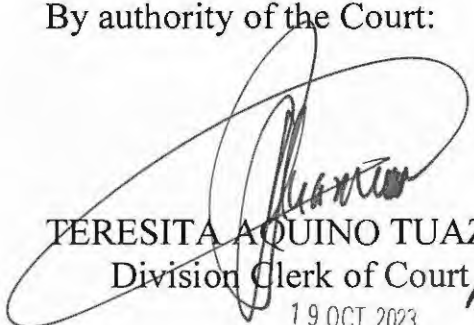
Significantly, under Section 110, Rule 20 of the same Rules, dropping from the rolls as a mode of separation from the service is non-disciplinary in nature and shall not result in the forfeiture of any benefit on the part of the official or employee or in disqualification from reemployment in the government.

**FOR THESE REASONS, Ms. Charlotte Carolyn P. Epistola, Court Stenographer I of the Municipal Circuit Trial Court for Cabatuan-Luna, Isabela is DROPPED FROM THE ROLLS effective March 1, 2023 and her position is declared VACANT. She is still qualified to receive the benefits she may be entitled to under existing laws and may still be reemployed in the government.**

Let a copy of this Resolution be served upon Charlotte Carolyn P. Epistola at her last known address at 5 Juan Dacanay, Purok 4, San Fermin, Cauayan, Isabela.

**SO ORDERED.” (LEONEN, S.A.J, on leave; but left a vote pursuant to Section 4, Rule 12 of the Supreme Court Internal Rules)**

By authority of the Court:

  
TERESITA AQUINO TUAZON  
Division Clerk of Court  
19 OCT 2023

HON. RAUL B. VILLANUEVA (x)  
Office of the Court Administrator  
HON. DEPUTY COURT ADMINISTRATOR  
Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorino (x)  
Leo T. Madrazo (x)  
ASSISTANT COURT ADMINISTRATOR  
Hon. Lilian C. Baribal-Co (x)  
Hon. Maria Regina Adoracion  
Filomena M. Ignacio (x)  
Legal Office (x)  
Court Management Office (x)  
Financial Management Office (x)  
Docket & Clearance Division (x)  
Office of Administrative Services (x)  
Office of the Court Administrator  
Supreme Court, Manila

CHARLOTTE CAROLYN P. EPISTOLA (reg)  
5 Juan Dacanay, Purok 4, San Fermin  
Cauayan, Isabela

HON. PRESIDING JUDGE (reg)  
Municipal Circuit Trial Court  
Cabatuan-Luna, Isabela

\*LEAVE DIVISION (x)  
\*CASH DIVISION (x)  
\*EMPLOYEES' WELFARE & BENEFITS DIVISION (x)  
Office of Administrative Services  
Office of the Court Administrator  
Supreme Court, Manila

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE (x)  
LIBRARY SERVICES (x)  
[For uploading pursuant to A.M. No. 12-7-SC]  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ATTORNEY (x)  
PHILIPPINE JUDICIAL ACADEMY (x)  
Supreme Court, Manila

\*For this resolution only  
*Please notify the Court of any change in your address.*  
AM23-08-29-MCTC. 10/04/2023B(636)URES *10/19*