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Wednesday of an alleged tax scam and recommended that she be suspended for 30 days without pay.

Dec. 13, 2012

A POLICE BOARD found Officer Elaine Thomas, a 15-year veteran of the force, guilty Wednesday of an alleged tax scam and recommended that she be suspended for 30 days without pay.

Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey has the final say on how Thomas should be disciplined and said that he had not yet read the Police Board of Inquiry's findings.

"As soon as I review it, I will make a final determination," he said.

Thomas, 41, allegedly falsely claimed in signed court documents in six real-estate transactions that she was related by blood to people who were listed as the sellers.

She allegedly falsified paperwork when buying homes to avoid a 3-percent city real-estate-transfer tax and a 1-percent state tax.

The District Attorney's Office investigated the case beginning in 2007, but in a June letter told Ramsey that it wouldn't prosecute Thomas. The D.A., however, did charge a notary, Chavon Reese, who notarized several court documents involving Thomas. Reese pleaded guilty to conspiracy and 23 counts of forgery in connection with stolen houses.

Police Internal Affairs proceeded with its investigation into six home transfers to Thomas from Allen McDonald, Margaret Carruth, Vincent Ruffin, Eugene Hamilton, Christine Kibler and Bulah Culver.

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Thomas, assigned to the 18th District in West Philadelphia, has declined to comment, and when a reporter called the district and asked for her, someone said, "Please stop calling here."

Ramsey initially had said that Daily News and Inquirer reporters could attend Wednesday's hearing. But after other news organizations asked to attend, Ramsey closed the hearing, saying that the room was not large enough.

Ramsey said that his decision was not linked to a letter sent by Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 5 to district commanders arguing that the proceeding is an internal investigation and therefore should be closed. The union implored members to demonstrate outside the Police Administration Building, where the hearing was held.

No demonstrators or Thomas supporters could be found outside the building.

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