

LONG ISLAND/SUFFOLK

## East Hampton terminates airport manager, rehires predecessor



*Jemille Charlton was terminated last week as manager of the East Hampton Airport in a 5-0 vote of the town board. He will be replaced by his predecessor. Photo Credit: Amanda Voisard*

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A change in management at East Hampton Town Airport is underway after East Hampton Town officials terminated airport director Jemille Charlton last week.

The town board voted 5-0 at its regular meeting on Oct. 20 to terminate Charlton as the acting town airport director. In another 5-0 vote afterward, the board voted to appoint previous airport director James Brundige to the position on an interim basis.

Brundige will return to the position nearly two years after he retired on Oct. 30, 2014. Charlton had been airport manager since September 2014.

Charlton, 35, of Southampton, a tech sergeant with the U.S. National Guard, is out of state on a training exercise. He said Tuesday that town attorneys notified him earlier this month of their decision to terminate his contract just before he reported to his training exercise. He said he was given no reason for the dismissal.

“They didn’t say anything,” said Charlton. “I asked, and basically the attorneys told me that I’m a provisional employee and that they don’t have to give me a reason.”

East Hampton Town Supervisor Larry Cantwell and Brundige did not return calls Tuesday seeking comment.

Charlton said he is on administrative leave until Nov. 12 but is no longer involved with any administrative airport activities. He called the decision “unjust” but said he plans to continue pursuing a career in the aviation industry.

“Aviation is my heart, it’s my love, and I wish I could do it at my own airport,” Charlton said. “If you look at my timesheet, you could see that I put in countless hours at that place [East Hampton Airport].”

Charlton added that he was proud of the work he had done, including efforts to modernize the airport’s tracking systems and working with airport users and committees to reduce aircraft noise at the facility.