

**VOLUSIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

REPORT NUMBER: IA-15-009

PERIOD COVERED: December 2014
DATE REPORTED: April 16, 2015
SUBJECT(S) NAME: Telecommunicator Michael Peterson #8330
INVESTIGATING OFFICERS: Lieutenant Jessica Paugh

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION:

On April 16, 2015, the Internal Affairs Unit received a supervisor's inquiry authored by Communications Coordinator Claudine Boring. The inquiry stated that Telecommunicator Samantha King received a picture from co-worker Michael Peterson that she deemed "inappropriate". This information was revealed during an interview conducted regarding a separate issue documented in VCSO IA 15-008.

OFFENSES:

This investigation is relevant to an alleged violation of Department Standards Directive:

26.2.34 Failure to Follow Directive or Order - Employees shall adhere to all official Directives and/or orders, and shall faithfully execute all the duties and responsibilities of their assigned position. (Violation subject up to a 5 day suspension.)

RE: 22.10 Workplace Harassment And Discrimination

Volusia County Merit System Rules and Regulations 86-453 (13) - Any conduct, on or off duty, that reflects unfavorably on the County as an employer. (This violation may be sufficient grounds for disciplinary action ranging from oral reprimand to dismissal, depending on the seriousness of the offense and other circumstances related to the situation.)

INVESTIGATIVE SUMMARY:

On June 8, 2015, Chief Deputy Robert L. Jones, III assigned the above incident to the Internal Affairs Unit. This report details the internal affairs investigation conducted by Lieutenant Jessica Paugh.

On June 8, 2015, Lieutenant Paugh served Telecommunicator Michael Peterson with a Notice of Internal Investigation in Daytona Beach, FL. *(See Tab – B for Official Correspondence)*

Communications Trainee Samantha King

On June 18, 2015, Lieutenant Jessica Paugh conducted a sworn recorded interview with Telecommunicator Samantha King at the Sheriff's Communication Center in Daytona, FL. The following is a summary of that interview:

TC King has been employed as a telecommunicator since April 2014.

TC King stated that during the month of December 2014, she was attending a work related training class with several coworkers from the Volusia County Sheriff's Office. During this class, a number of the co-workers shared their contact information, to include their phone numbers. TC King advised that she and TC Peterson became acquaintances and shared emails, texts, and pictures through a social media application named "snap chat". Trainee King stated that one evening she received a picture via snap chat from TC Peterson that she reported to be "inappropriate". TC King stated she never solicited any pictures directly from TC Peterson, but had received other photos from him in normal, uncompromised, social settings. TC King stated that she ignored the "inappropriate picture" by not responding or speaking with TC Peterson about it at the time. TC King stated that TC Peterson had requested she send nude photos of herself to him, to which she did not respond. TC King advised the contact between the two eventually faded and would describe their relationship as normal co-workers. TC King stated she and TC Peterson never spoke of the "inappropriate" picture and never exchanged further photos. *(See Tab – E for Official Transcript)*

Telecommunicator Michael Peterson

On June 23, 2015 Sergeant Sawicki conducted a sworn recorded interview with TC Michael Peterson at the Sheriff's Communications Center, Daytona, FL. The following is a summary of that interview:

TC Peterson has been employed by the Volusia County Sheriff's Office for approximately 11 months. TC Peterson is currently assigned to the Communications center, assigned as a telecommunicator.

TC Peterson advised that he met TC King in a training class where their phone numbers were exchanged after several classmates were attempting to coordinate a bowling outing. TC Peterson stated he and TC King began to converse via SMS text, as well as social media sites, such as Facebook and Snap Chat.

TC Peterson stated he asked TC King for her phone number in attempt to "hang out outside of work".

TC Peterson advised he sent TC King an unsolicited, inappropriate photo on December 15, 2014. TC Peterson stated he was trying to be "funny" and believed that based on their previous

conversations this type of action would not be construed as offensive. TC Peterson advised he did not recall TC King's exact response; however it did not appear TC King was offended. TC Peterson advised he asked for a nude picture from TC King and reportedly received a suggestive photo from TC King on December 18, 2014. The photo did not depict a face, so the identity could not be confirmed.

TC Peterson stated he was unaware this was unwanted and TC King never told him to stop. TC King stated he had sent another picture to TC King of himself in a towel to show his "progress" with getting physically fit. TC Peterson advised these were the only two photos he sent that would be deemed inappropriate.

TC Peterson was provided a copy of the Volusia County Sheriff's Office Work Place Harassment Policy Chapter 22 and Volusia County Merit System Rules and Regulations 86-453 (13). TC Peterson was asked if he felt he violated the following policies:

26.2.34 Failure to Follow Directive or Order - Employees shall adhere to all official Directives and/or orders, and shall faithfully execute all the duties and responsibilities of their assigned position. **YES**

RE: 22.10 Workplace Harassment And Discrimination

Volusia County Merit System Rules and Regulations 86-453 (13). Any conduct, on or off duty, that reflects unfavorably on the County as an employer. **YES**

(See Tab - I for Official Transcript)

CONCLUSION:

On XX, 2015, this investigation was presented to the Sheriff. After review, the Sheriff determined the violations of the below listed Department Standards Directive to be:

26.2.34 Failure to Follow Directive or Order - Employees shall adhere to all official Directives and/or orders, and shall faithfully execute all the duties and responsibilities of their assigned position. (Violation subject up to a 5 day suspension.)

RE: 22.10 Workplace Harassment And Discrimination

Volusia County Merit System Rules and Regulations 86-453 (13). Any conduct, on or off duty, that reflects unfavorably on the County as an employer.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Report of Investigation
- B. Official Correspondence
- C. Supervisors Inquiry
- D. Advisement Administration of Oath/Perjury Warning/Garrity Warning
- E. Official Transcript of Telecommunicator Samantha King
- F. Official transcript of Telecommunicator Michael Peterson
- G. Digital Media

I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, under the penalty of perjury, that, to the best of my personal knowledge, information, and belief, I have not knowingly or willfully deprived, or allowed another to deprive, the suspect of the investigation of any rights contained in ss. 112.532 and 112.533, Florida Statutes.

INVESTIGATOR: _____

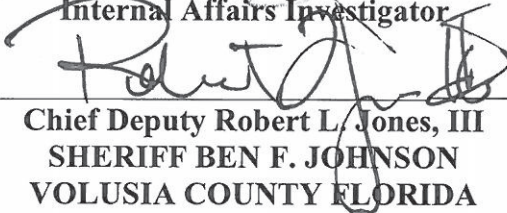


**Lieutenant Jessica Paugh
Internal Affairs Investigator**

DATE: _____

10/20/15

APPROVED BY: _____



**Chief Deputy Robert L. Jones, III
SHERIFF BEN F. JOHNSON
VOLUSIA COUNTY FLORIDA**

DATE: _____

10.20.15