



Spokane County Sheriff's Citizens Advisory and Review Board

October 14, 2016

Ozzie Knezovich, Sheriff
Spokane County Sheriff's Office
Public Safety Building.
1100 W. Mallon Avenue
Spokane, WA 99206

Sheriff Knezovich,

On May 20, 2016 the Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) requested the investigation files from the Washington State Patrol (WSP) and Spokane County Sheriff's Internal Affairs (I/A) regarding the Deputy Speer case. The goal was to determine if the investigation was handled in an appropriate manner and make recommendations of finding for your review.

On May 5, 2016, a Spokane County Sheriff's Deputy, Cole Speer, was fired for violating several Sheriff's Department policies. The firing was a direct result of behavior unbecoming as a School Resource Officer at Central Valley High School. The Washington State Patrol (WSP) was called to investigate the allegations in an effort to avoid any conflict of interest, per common practice. This case was also forwarded to the prosecutor's office for review and a separate investigation was conducted by the Sheriff's Office of Professional Standards Internal (A/I). At this time no criminal charges have been filed against Deputy Speer.

After reviewing the documentation provided by the WSP and I/A, the CAB found the following:

Presently there are no directives, policies, or procedures given for a Spokane County Sheriff acting in the role of a Spokane County Resource Officer (SCRO) except the language provided in the Agreement between the Spokane County Sheriff's Office and the school. There is mandatory training provided for the SCRO.

The CAB concurs with the termination of Deputy Speer based on the violations of several Sheriff's policies. Violated policies are:

Sheriff Policy 340.3.2 (a): Any conduct tending to destroy public respect and confidence in the operation of police services or the efficiency of the Sheriff's Office. Deputies shall conduct themselves at all times both on and off duty in such a manner as to reflect favorably on the department. Conduct unbecoming an officer shall include that which brings the department into disrepute or reflects discredit upon the deputy as a member of the department or that which impairs the operation or efficiency of the department or any deputy or employee.

Sheriff Policy 702.6 (a) Use of Personal Communication Devices (PCD): A PCD may not be used to conduct personal business while on-duty, except for brief personal communications (e.g., informing a family member of extended hours). Employees shall endeavor to limit their use of PCD's to authorized break times unless an emergency exists.

Sheriff Policy 340.3.5 (ae): False or misleading statements to a supervisor or other person in a position of authority in connection with any investigation or employment-related matter.



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Sheriff Policy 340.3.5 (af): Failure to comply with the oath of office and agency policies, including the duty to be truthful and honest in the conduct of official business.

Spokane County Sheriff's Office Code of Ethics: I vow to be fully truthful and honest in my dealings with others. I deplore lies and half-truths that mislead or do not fully inform those who must depend upon my honesty. While I consider the way I choose to conduct my private affairs a personal freedom, I accept the responsibilities for my actions, as well as inactions, while on-duty or off-duty, when those actions bring disrepute on the public image of my employer, my fellow officers, and the law enforcement profession.

The evidence uncovered as a result of the investigation suggests that Deputy Speer formed a close inter-personal relationship with a minor student attending CVSD. The relationship did not become sexual in nature until after the student reached the age of consent.

FINDINGS

The CAB concurs with the findings of the WSP and I/A investigations and the reports provided are considered thorough and complete. Deputy Speer's termination was appropriate for the nature of the violations based on the Sheriff's policies referenced in the Agreement and that he had sworn to uphold. No charges were filed by the Spokane County Prosecutor's Office against Deputy Speer.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is the recommendation of the CAB, that the Sheriff's Office ensure all Spokane County School Resource Officers are familiar with expectations set forth in the Agreement signed by the Sheriff's office and the School District they are assigned to, to ensure the integrity of the program and the Sheriff's Department and their own personal reputation.

Respectfully submitted,

The Spokane Citizens Advisory and Review Board.