

PRESS RELEASE

March 28, 2022

RE: Eureka Police Department Investigation into Texting and Misconduct

In March of 2021, the City of Eureka retained Todd Simonson of Sacks Ricketts & Case, LLP to conduct an independent investigation into certain text messages between an EPD Sergeant and members of the department, between January and August of 2020. Some of these text messages were published by the Sacramento Bee in a March 17, 2021 article. After the commencement of the investigation, the initial scope was expanded to include allegations of misconduct by a Department Captain, Sergeant and three Officers. Mr. Simonson interviewed members of the Eureka Police Department and other witnesses as part of this comprehensive and independent third-party investigation.

Based on findings within the investigative report, then Chief Steve Watson recommended disciplinary action of both the Captain and Sergeant. Interim Police Chief Todd Jarvis was tasked with reviewing the matter and determining the final discipline after Chief Watson's retirement. On March 25, 2022, while disciplinary action was pending, both the involved Captain and Sergeant contacted Chief Jarvis and requested to immediately retire from EPD. Their retirements are effective March 25, 2022. One officer who was placed on administrative leave pending investigation in March of 2021, terminated employment with the City on September 17, 2021. Appropriate corrective action has been taken on all other individuals involved.

Chief Jarvis stated, "the text messages brought to light by the article and confirmed during the independent investigation were abhorrent and are not representative of the respect that members of EPD have for our citizenry. These actions fly in the face of the extensive efforts that our team has taken to ensure we address every challenge with a clear focus on human dignity, professionalism, and respect for the individual."

The City of Eureka would like to thank the public for their patience during this extensive investigation and as it navigated through the many regulations surrounding police employment. "Thank you for standing with us, as together, we weathered this storm. Your continued support of the Eureka Police Department has not gone unnoticed and is deeply appreciated," stated City Manager Slattery.

City Manager Slattery intends to ask the Independent Police Auditor (IPA) to conduct a complete review and audit of the entire process surrounding this investigation and its disposition. The results of this review will be made available per the guidelines and agreement between the IPA and the City of Eureka.

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