

**COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S MERIT BOARD**

**In the Matter of:**

**DEPUTY SHERIFF  
RONNIE MCGREGOR**

**[REDACTED]**

**EMPLOYEE  
STAR #111430**

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Docket No. 1818

**DECISION**

This matter coming on to be heard, by Board member Brian J. Riordan, pursuant to notice, the Cook County Sheriff's Merit Board finds as follows:

**Jurisdiction**

1. Deputy Sheriff Ronnie McGregor (hereinafter "Respondent" or "McGregor"), was appointed a Deputy Sheriff on June 16, 2003;
2. On September 2, 2003, the Respondent was assigned to District 6 Markham Courthouse, located at 16501 S. Kedzie Parkway, Markham, Illinois;
3. On August 16, 2012, Respondent was assigned to Civil Process at The Richard J. Daley Center, located at 50 W. Washington Street, Chicago, Illinois;
4. On October 18, 2012, Respondent was assigned to the Civil Process at the Bridgeview Courthouse, located at 10220 S. 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Bridgeview, Illinois;
5. On September 22, 2014, the Respondent was assigned to Civil Process at the Markham Courthouse, located at 16501 S. Kedzie Parkway, Markham, Illinois;
6. Respondent's position as a Sheriff's Officer involves duties and responsibilities to the public;
7. Each member of the Cook County Sheriff's Merit Board, hereinafter "Board", has been duly appointed to serve as a member of the Board pursuant to confirmation by the Cook County Board of Commissioners, State of Illinois, to sit for a stated term;
8. The Board has jurisdiction of the subject matter and of the parties in accordance with Chapter 55 of the Illinois Compiled Statutes;
9. Respondent was personally served with a copy of the Complaint against him and a Notice of Hearing and appeared before the Board to contest the charges contained in the Complaint with counsel; and

10. The Board has heard the evidence presented by the Sheriff and the Respondent and has evaluated the credibility of the witnesses and supporting evidence. After consideration of the evidence, the Board finds as follows:

### **Background**

The Sheriff alleges that on July 27, 2012, the Respondent was indicted by a Cook County Grand Jury under case no. [REDACTED], and charged with two counts of theft in violation of 720 ILCS 5/16-1 (a) (1 and 2) (c) for his acts of obtaining or exerting unauthorized control over property exceeding \$100,000 and not exceeding \$500,000 in value and using, concealing or abandoning said property, knowing such use, concealment or abandonment probably would deprive the said owner permanently of such use or benefit.

Also, on July 22, 2012, the Respondent was indicted by a Cook County Grand Jury under case no. [REDACTED] and charged with two counts of Financial Institution Fraud in violation of 720 ILCS 5/16H-25 (1) for his acts of executing or attempting to execute a scheme or artifice to either defraud a financial institution or obtain any of the monies owed by or under the custody or control of a financial institution, by means of pretenses, representations, or promises he knew to be false.

The Sheriff further alleges that the Respondent obtained by deception control over United States currency in the amount of \$275,000, from property owner [REDACTED] by creating a false impression upon the same owner and others that the information submitted during the mortgage loan application process and the closing for the purchase of property located at [REDACTED] was true and accurate, which the Respondent did not believe to be true.

The Sheriff further alleges that the Respondent obtained by deception control over United States currency in the amount of \$365,000 on the property from the owner [REDACTED] by creating a false impression upon the said owner and others, and false impression being the information submitted during the mortgage application process and for the closing of the property located at [REDACTED], which was not true or accurate, which the Respondent did not believe to be true.

It is further alleged that the Respondent filled out paperwork and participated in actions meant to defraud financial institutions by way of mortgage fraud.

The Sheriff further alleges that the Respondent failed in his duties to report his indictment when he only submitted a memorandum to Assistant Chief [REDACTED] informing him that he had "a case pending in Circuit Court of Cook County" and that "this was a personal business and legal matter and had no involvement with (Respondent's) employment."

The Sheriff further alleges that the Respondent violated the Cook County Sheriff's Rules and Orders by failing to notify them of the circumstances surrounding the indictments, specifically that he had been arrested, indicted, and charged with four counts of theft and two counts of Financial Institution Fraud.

The Sheriff further alleges that on March 24, 2015, the Respondent pled guilty to and was convicted of theft in violation of 720 ILCS 5/16-1 (a)(1) (C) and was sentenced to 18 months of probation.

The Sheriff alleges that the Respondent failed to verbally notify the CCSO by calling the Cook County Communications Center and/or submit a written report notifying the CCSO that he pled guilty to and was convicted of theft in violation of 720 ILCS 5/16-1 (a)(1)(C) and that he was sentenced to 18 months of probation on March 24, 2015.

The Sheriff alleges that by these actions the Respondent violated the Rules and Regulations and General Orders of the Cook County Sheriff's Office and the Court Services Department, specifically alleges the Respondent violated:

**GENERAL ORDER 3401.1 (effective date: March 15, 2001)  
RULES OF CONDUCT, in its entirety, including, but not limited to, the following subparts:**

**V. RESPONSIBILITY**

**It is the responsibility of every member of the C.S.D. to conform to the rules of conduct.**

**VI. RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ALL SWORN OFFICERS AND CIVILIAN MEMBERS**

**A. Compliance with Laws, Ordinances, and Regulations**

- 1. Members will uphold the Constitution of the United States and the State of Illinois, obey all federal, state and local laws in which jurisdiction the member is present and comply with court decisions and orders of courts having jurisdiction.**
- 2. A conviction for the violation of any law will be prima facie evidence of a violation of this directive.**

**B. Conduct On Duty and Off Duty.**

**CCSO employees shall:**

- 1. Members will conduct themselves on and off-duty in such a manner to reflect favorably on the department. Members, whether on or off duty, will not engage in conduct which discredits the integrity of the department, its employees or the member, or which impairs the operations of the department. Such actions will constitute conduct unbecoming an officer.**

2. Members will maintain a level of moral conduct in their personal and business affairs that is in keeping with the highest standards of the law enforcement profession. Members will not participate in any incident involving moral turpitude that impairs their ability to perform as law enforcement officers or causes the department to be brought into disrepute.

**I. Duty Functions**

5. When a member becomes aware that he/she is the subject of an investigation by a governmental agency other than the Cook County Sheriff's Office or its related departments, he/she will immediately notify his/her commanding officer and inform him/her of the circumstances surrounding the incident being investigated, the agency conducting said investigation and what actions he/she has taken to resolve the matter.

**VIII. APPLICABILITY**

This order applies to all C.S.D. personnel and is for strict compliance.

**SHERIFF'S ORDER 11.2.20.1 (effective date: March 12, 2015)**

**CONDUCT POLICY, in its entirety, including, but not limited to, the following subparts:**

**III. APPLICABILITY**

This policy is applicable to all CCSO members. Any member found in violation of this policy may be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment, in accordance with any applicable collective bargaining agreements and state and federal statute. Any conflict with existing collective bargaining agreements shall be resolved in favor of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

**IV. COMPLIANCE WITH ALL LAWS, ORDINANCES AND REGULATIONS**

Members shall respect and protect the civil and legal rights of all individuals; uphold the constitutions of the United States and the State of Illinois obey all applicable federal, state and local laws; comply with court decisions and orders of courts having jurisdiction; and comply with lawful rules, written or

verbal orders, SEAM articles, policies and procedures issued by the CCSO or by any supervisor.

**V. CONDUCT POLICY**

A. The continued employment or retention of every CCSO member shall be based on conduct that reasonably conforms to the guidelines set forth herein. Failure of any member to meet the guidelines set forth in this policy, whether on-duty or off-duty may be cause disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

**VI. CONDUCT WHICH MAY RESULT IN DISCIPLINE**

The following list of causes for disciplinary action constitutes a portion of the disciplinary standards of the CCSO. This list is not intended to cover every possible type of misconduct and does not preclude the recommendation of disciplinary action for specific action or inaction that is detrimental to efficient service. Conduct which may result in discipline includes but is not limited to the following:

**B. Conduct**

g. Failure to immediately report, as soon as practicable, to the respective department head or the authorized designee via the chain of command, activities that have resulted in official contact by any other law enforcement agency, investigative body or charging authority.

r. If a member is arrested, indicted, or convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, he/she shall:

i. Make verbal notification as soon as practicable via telephone to the Cook County Communications center at (847) 294-4731; and

ii. Submit a written report as soon as practicable upon return to work, or within 48 hours if off work, via the chain of command to the respective department head or the authorized designee, and to the Office of Professional Review (OPR); and

iii. The report shall specify the facts forming the basis for the arrest, indictment or conviction, and outline the specifics of the case.

**E. Performance**

- 26. Any knowing or negligent violation of the provisions of policy, operating procedures or other written directive of an authorized supervisor. Members are responsible for reading and becoming familiar with the contents of applicable policies and procedures, and are responsible for compliance with the content contained therein.
- 28. Criminal, dishonest, infamous or disgraceful conduct adversely affecting the employee/employer relationship (including applicable members) whether on-duty or off-duty
- 42. Any misdemeanor or felony violation.
- 43. Any other on- or off-duty conduct which a member knows or reasonably should know is unbecoming a member of the CCSO; which is contrary to good order, efficiency or morale; or which tends to reflect unfavorably upon the CCSO or its members

Furthermore, the Respondent's actions violated the Rules and Regulations of the Cook County Sheriff's Merit Board, specifically:

**COOK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT MERIT BOARD RULES AND REGULATIONS, in its entirety, including but not limited to, the following subparts:**

**Article X, Paragraph B**

**No Police Officer of the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department, Correctional Officer of the Cook County Department of Corrections or any Deputy Sheriff of the Cook County Sheriff's Court Services Department will:**

- 1. violate any Law or Statute of any State or of the United States of America.
- 2. violate any Ordinance or any County or Municipal Government.

3. **violate any of the general orders, special orders, directives or rules and regulations of the Cook County Sheriff's Office.**

### Prosecution Case

The prosecution's first witness [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Mr. [REDACTED] testified he has been an investigator with the Office of Profession Review (OPR) since 2013 and worked on this case. In review of this case, he testified he looked at the court documents, the memorandum that McGregor submitted and the General Orders. His findings were that there was a violation of the General Orders. He stated that he believed the Respondent was in violation of conduct unbecoming an officer. He stated that the investigation took some time because of the criminal case that was ongoing and he needed to wait until that completed. He testified that the documents were clear that the Respondent was indicted of property theft citing Exhibit 1 which was admitted into evidence which was the certified statement of conviction disposition.

Mr. [REDACTED] stated that the outcome of the criminal case was that McGregor pleaded guilty to misdemeanor theft and was sentenced to 18 months probation. He further testified that the Respondent was in violation of General Rule 3401.1 which he said clearly applies to the Respondent's duty and behavior. Mr. [REDACTED] cited that law enforcement officers are held to a higher standard than a regular civilian and that they are not allowed to violate any laws of the Constitution, the State or Municipalities and their behavior must reflect favorably on the Cook County Sheriff's Office.

Mr. [REDACTED] further testified that it is a violation of the Sheriff and Merit Board Orders if the officer is convicted for the violation of any law and will be prima facie evidence of a violation of this directive. Mr. [REDACTED] further testified that the General Order does not differentiate between a felony or a misdemeanor.

Mr. [REDACTED] further testified that the Respondent was responsible pursuant to the Order to immediately inform and notify his or her commanding officer and inform them of the circumstances surrounding the incident being investigated and the agency conducting the said investigation and what actions he or she has taken to resolve the matter. He further testified that the notification that the Respondent relies on was completely insufficient in terms of following this General Order. He testified it did not comply with the Order because it did not indicate any specifics regarding his arrest, specifics that there was a criminal case against him that he had been indicted. Further it did not name the agency conducting the investigation and does not detail any resolution.

Mr. [REDACTED] testified that the Respondent also violated the Sheriff's Order 11.2.20.1 and stated that Order definitely applies to Deputy McGregor. This particular order identifies what conduct may result in discipline and that Order contains violations for failure to immediately report as soon as practical the respective department head or authorized designee be the chain of command activities that have resulted in official contact by any other law enforcement agency, investigating body or charging authority. He further testified that the Respondent violated this Order by not following this directive to notify properly his immediate supervisors.

Further testimony from Investigator [REDACTED] included that it also was a violation of this Order because Respondent ultimately was convicted of a misdemeanor and did he not make further notification to his supervisor.

Mr. [REDACTED] further testified regarding violations of Merit Board Article X Rules and Regulations, the conduct of employees. He testified that the Respondent was in violation of this Order because he pled guilty to a misdemeanor so he violated the laws and statutes, ordinances of the State, County or municipal government. This guilty plea was also a violation of the General Orders of the Sheriff.

### Cross Examination

Investigator [REDACTED] testified on cross examination that he waited to complete his investigation until the criminal case was completed. He stated that he agreed that he could have pursued the case and that it was the decision by the Sheriff's Office to wait.

He further testified that the Respondent only pled guilty to one of the charges and that he is not positive what happen to the others and they may have been stricken. He testified that he believed they were *nolle prosequi*. He agree that Respondent only pled guilty to a misdemeanor, not a felony.

He further testified that he completed his investigation and passed it up the chain and that the recommendation for separation from employment was done at the director level. He testified consistent with his synopsis of his investigation. He testified that he did not do any interviews and did not take any statements from any witnesses or the Respondent. He testified to his file material that he reviewed and he was not sure whether the Respondent was given information supposedly sent from the State's Attorney's Office regarding his criminal case.

On cross examination, Respondent's attorney attempted to establish that his client may not have received all of the information from the State's Attorney, however this witness had no factual knowledge regarding whether that was true or not. He testified he did not interview any of the other people charged with similar crimes as McGregor. He testified he did not know the case against McGregor was vacated.

### Respondent's Case

Respondent's first witness is **Ronnie McGregor**.

Respondent testified that in 2012 he was operating a business by the name of [REDACTED] [REDACTED]s which was a real estate investment company where they bought foreclosed properties, rehab them and did some improvements. He testified that during the course of that business he was approached by the FBI in the summer of 2012 where they asked to speak with him at his home. They asked him a number of questions about individuals and if he knew them or not. He did not believe that he was under investigation at that time. He testified that after the investigation by the FBI they told him that the State's Attorney's Office wanted to talk to him.

He testified he had an attorney that accompanied him in the interview with State's Attorney's Office. At the time he went to meet with the State's Attorney's Office, he believed

he was a victim and he was possibly going to be a witness for charges against other individuals regarding mortgage fraud.

Respondent further testified that he did not receive correspondence from the State's Attorney's Office regarding his criminal case. He said he was not informed of his original court date and didn't get some information coming from the State's Attorney's Office. He testified that he did not know he was indicted until his first court date of August 15, 2012.

Respondent stated he believed he made proper notification to his supervisor with the memo that he submitted. The memo was Exhibit 3 that was admitted into evidence.

Respondent testified that he pled guilty after discussing the matter with his attorney and the financial burden that would come trying to fight the charges. He stated that his attorney was able to plead the matter down to a Class A misdemeanor and they discussed whether he would be able to work or not. He stated that he believed at the time that he would be able to continue to work with just a Class A misdemeanor on his record. He stated he further discussed with his attorney that after a certain amount of time he could get the conviction vacated and that he would only have to serve probation but that if he went to trial it would be expensive and you do not know what could happen. He stated that the ultimate decision was that he did not have the finances to support fighting the charges.

Respondent testified that the matter was vacated on December 14, 2015 and that this matter would be removed from his record going forward. He believed it was like "it never happened."

He further testified that even during the investigation of OPR he was allowed to continue to work.

Respondent's explanation of his memo by failing to make a notification was that he thought he did when he sent the memo. He further stated that he believes he verbally notified Chief [REDACTED] of what was going on in his case.

Respondent stated he was never interviewed by OPR and was never able to tell them the full story of what happened.

### **Cross Examination**

Respondent testified that he did not put the criminal case number on his memorandum of notification. He did not put any information regarding the criminal defense attorney, the charges, the resolution.

He testified regarding his position and duties at the time of his arrest which included him having access to arrest reports and computer with criminal histories.

Respondent stated he did not feel confused about what his reporting duties were and he did not need to ask anyone whether his memo needed more details. He stated he did have access of all general orders and he understands it is his responsibility to know them all. He stated he would have reviewed all of the general orders when they came out and agreed again that it was

his duty to know and understand them all. He testified he did not make any efforts to supplement his memo regarding his criminal case because he believed he had made all the notifications that he was required to make.

Respondent then alleged that he also sent a second memo to Chief [REDACTED] however he did not bring that memo to the hearing and it was not turned over in discovery that was specifically requested by the Sheriff's Office on July 7, 2015. Since Respondent failed to turn over this alleged second memo and the Sheriff's Office did not have any knowledge of it, and Respondent did not call Chief [REDACTED] to testify, any testimony regarding the alleged second memo was stricken.

Respondent testified that during his criminal plea agreement he did have to stipulate to all the facts of that plea. He had to stipulate regarding all the underlying criminal charges being put forth in court when he took that plea agreement. He also waived all of his rights for a jury and waived all of rights to put on a defense.

When questioned about the transcript of the hearing when he pled, he had to admit that he stipulated to that

"He was paid by [REDACTED] on November 9, 2007 who he would identify in open court to tell [REDACTED] [REDACTED] worked for the defendant's company which was called [REDACTED]. It was the testimony that Mr. [REDACTED] had asked Mr. McGregor to verify the employment of [REDACTED] in order to qualify Don [REDACTED] for a mortgage loan of \$365,000 from [REDACTED]. The records from [REDACTED] would show that on or about November 9, 2007, [REDACTED] called telephone number [REDACTED] which she had checked with 411 and that was the number of [REDACTED]. The records would show that she called that number and the person who answered the phone said that [REDACTED] worked at [REDACTED]. The records of [REDACTED] would show that the reliance of employment of Don [REDACTED] [REDACTED] approved a loan for \$365,000 to [REDACTED] those funds were provided on November 15, 2007 for the purchase of [REDACTED]. The records of [REDACTED] would show that the loan went into default. It was not repaid [REDACTED] took a lost on that loan. The People would also call [REDACTED] who would testify under oath that he did not work for [REDACTED]. He would testify that [REDACTED] paid him to purchase, to take out that loan using false information and he did not repay the loan. This was also stipulated by the Respondent's attorney Mr. [REDACTED]

The Respondent testified that he does recall that and he did stipulate to those facts, but had no reason to believe it was not true.

Respondent testified that his sentence was only 18 months probation because it was under the treatment alternative to street crime the TASC. He testified he was eligible for that because he had a problem with alcohol. He testified that once he learned of the OPR investigation he never requested to give a statement to them.

#### Redirect Examination

Respondent testified that he did not know OPR had an opened an investigation so therefore he could not have requested to give them a statement. He testified that he completed all of the requirements by the court for his probation. He paid all of the fines that were necessary. He stated that he thought he was in compliance with all general orders at all times.

He testified that he has no disciplinary history whatsoever. He testified that he has continued to work at the Sheriff's Office since this investigation and since he was de-deputized.

### **Findings of Fact**

Based on the evidence presented, the testimony of the witnesses, as well as all of the exhibits admitted into evidence, it is the Board's decision that Respondent Ronnie McGregor did violate the Sheriff's Orders and the Cook County Sheriff Merit Board Rules and Regulations. It is this Board's decision that the facts support that the Respondent pled guilty of a Class A misdemeanor which actions were pled down from a six count indictment for theft and Financial Institution Fraud. It was clear from the testimony that the Respondent was an active participant in the mortgage fraud in which he pled guilty. He stipulated to the facts regarding his criminal conviction that he intentionally provided false information to a financial institution so that an improper mortgage could be placed on a property. He stipulated to all these facts and did not contest them in court, or at the Merit Board hearing.

While his case was later vacated pursuant to him completing probation, that does not cure the fact that he committed this crime and admitted to doing so. Further, Respondent's credibility regarding his attempts to notify his superior officers and the Cook County Sheriff's Office regarding his indictment, the investigation and the subsequent conviction is completely lacking. His short two sentence memo entered into evidence as joint Exhibit 3 in no way notifies the Sheriff of what is actually going on in the Respondent's criminal case. In this case, the Respondent admits that he was aware of the Sheriff General Orders, admits that he violated them by pleading guilty to the criminal charge. The underlying charges and stipulations to his role are very serious offenses and the Sheriff's Office cannot have its officers engaged in this type of schemes. His other violations regarding notification and reporting were clearly proven by the Sheriff's Office.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

Based on the evidence presented and after assessing the credibility of the witnesses and weight to be given the evidence and the record, the Board finds that the Respondent did violate the Rules and Regulations of the Cook County Sheriff's Office and the Merit Board.

Wherefore, based on the foregoing, it is hereby ordered that Respondent Ronnie McGregor be separated from employment with the Cook County Sheriff's Office effective June 15, 2015.

Ronnie McGregor #1818

[Redacted]

James P. Nally, Chairman

[Redacted]

Byron Brazier, Vice Chairman

[Redacted]

Pat Brady, Board Member

[Redacted]

John Dalicandro, Secretary

[Redacted]

Jennifer Bac, Board Member

[Redacted]

\* Brian J. Riordan - Hearing Officer

[Redacted]

Kim Widun, Board Member

[Redacted]

Vince Winters, Board Member

[Redacted]

Gray Mateo-Harris, Board Member

Dated: March 3, 2016

