



PORT ST LUCIE MAYOR ENGAGES IN CRIMINAL MISCONDUCT

On various occasions between 2010 to the present, Port St. Lucie Mayor Shannon Martin, married to a Sergeant in the Port St. Lucie Police Department, corruptly misused her position, conspired and interfered with administration and directed City staff in violation of the City charter and State law. Sgt. Martin and the Mayor "covered up" crimes, misused their public position for their direct benefit, and interfered with City staff in violation of ethics and open government laws. Various members of current and former City staff are familiar with the misconduct, but fear retaliation by termination or harassment. In fact, many of the witnesses to the following examples are no longer employed by the City. As an elected official for the City of Port St. Lucie, each councilperson has an equal voting right to establish policy. Not one individual carries more power than the rest, however, that is not the reality. Everyone knows who runs the Police Department, and its not the Chief.

CITY CHARTER

Sec. 3.05. - Mayor. The Mayor shall be a voting member of the city council and shall attend and preside at meetings of the council, represent the city in intergovernmental relationships, appoint with the advice and consent of the council the members of citizen advisory boards and commissions, present an annual state of the city message, appoint the members and officers of council committees, assign subject to the consent of council agenda items to committees, **and perform other duties specified by the council.** The Mayor shall be recognized as head of the city government for all ceremonial purposes and by the governor for purposes of military law **but shall have no administrative duties.**

Sec. 3.07. - Interference with administration. Except for the purpose of inquiries relating to present or proposed legislation, the council or its members shall deal with the city officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the City Manager, **solely through the City Manager and neither the council nor its members shall give orders to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately.**

SEX ON DUTY

In 2010, Officer Aaron Martin, husband of newly-elected Councilwoman Shannon Martin engaged in sexual conduct with Erica Loupe (Curry), another Police officer, while on duty, many times in his home while both were employed by the PSLPD. Erica was, at the time, married to another officer of the Department. Although the PSLPD received a complaint,

the Department never investigated for fear of retaliation. Having sex on duty not only violates the public trust and confidence, is a theft of time and impedes the ability of the Police Department to timely respond to necessary calls, but also demonstrated the ability early on which provided the Martin's with the power to do and say whatever they wanted for their own benefit. If any other police officer is accused of having sex on duty, an investigation commences and the officer is placed on leave pending the outcome. Officers are not provided a "break" during their shift for which they have the opportunity to lawfully engage in sexual conduct. Therefore, any sexual behavior on-duty is considered loafing, neglecting performing assigned duties, immoral and unlawful as well as improper conduct and indecency. As of the date of this letter, Sgt. Martin has never been placed on leave, despite repeated violations of PSLPD policy.

PSLPD Rules and Regulations Group 3B, #8, Ethical Standards. Members shall maintain a level of moral conduct in ethics and their personal and business affairs which is the highest standards of the law enforcement profession. Personnel shall not participate in any incident involving moral character which impairs their ability to perform as law enforcement officers or causes the City or the Police Department to be brought into disrepute. The code of ethics is outlined in Florida Statutes and GG #527.

Witnesses:

Aaron Martin
Shannon Martin
Rob Loupe
Erica Curry Loupe

INTERFERING WITH INVESTIGATION

The Police Department terminated Officer Hailey Nine for misconduct, in November of 2015 but not after Mayor Martin and her husband expressed their discontent and interfered with the internal affairs investigation on several occasions. Months later, the City of West Palm Beach hired Officer Nine. How great does it look that our councilwomen and her husband took pictures pinning the badge on Hailey in West Palm Beach? The Palm Beach Post

INTERNAL AFFAIRS SCHOOL

Sgt. Martin applied various times for approval to attend Internal Affairs school. Port St. Lucie Police Department policy dictates the process by which an officer applies for approval to attend a specialized school. Sgt. Martin was not employed by the division for

which he would benefit by attending this school, thus he was not qualified to attend. However, after multiple denials by the command staff, Mayor Martin intervened and dictated that her husband be approved to attend the schooling. This is a direct and corrupt misuse of a public position at the highest levels and discounts the public's trust and confidence in any elected official.

MISUSE OF PUBLIC POSITION.—No public officer, employee of an agency, or local government attorney shall corruptly use or attempt to use his or her official position or any property or resource which may be within his or her trust, or perform his or her official duties, to secure a special privilege, benefit, or exemption for himself, herself, or others. (Ch. 112.313(6), Florida statute)

INTERNAL AFFAIRS CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

After misusing their positions to get Sgt. Martin into IA school. As part of an IA for an officer that reported to Sgt. Martin, in January 2016, Sgt. Martin took issue with internal affairs investigation concerning Officer Cassiniti, specifically with respect to the Confidentiality Form. Sgt. Martin went to his wife, who, again, interfered with administration and complained to City staff regarding said form. Mayor Martin misused her position and directed the form be changed to accommodate the needs of her husband and her friends.

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Witnesses:

Patricia Roebing
Keri Norbraten
John Bolduc
Mayor Martin
Sgt. Martin

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS INVESTIGATIONS

In November 2016, Assistant Chief Vega's brother Michael Vega was arrested by the Port St. Lucie Police Department. A third-party complainant claimed that Assistant Chief Vega misused his position to ensure his brother went to jail. Police Department policy and state law dictate the process by which investigations occur. Instead of conducting an Internal Affairs investigation outlined by Florida law, Mayor Martin interfered and directed City staff to enter into an agreement with City of Stuart to perform the investigation. This agreement was not approved by the City Council and remains in effect until this day. The Port St. Lucie Police Department expended taxpayer dollars for the benefit of a separate agency to conduct the investigation. If the City expended funds in the outside investigation of the Assistant Chief, the City Council and the taxpayers should have the right to approve any expenditure of taxpayer dollars.

Florida Statute 163.01 (5) A joint exercise of power pursuant to this section **shall** be made by contract in the form of an interlocal agreement. The manner of employing, engaging, compensating, transferring, or discharging necessary personnel, subject to the provisions of applicable civil service and merit systems. The fixing and collecting of charges, rates, rents, or fees, where appropriate, and the making and promulgation of necessary rules and regulations and their enforcement by or with the assistance of the participating parties to the interlocal agreement.

City Charter, Sec. 3.05. - Mayor. The Mayor shall have no administrative duties.

City Charter, Sec. 3.07. - Interference with administration. *Neither the council nor its members shall give orders to any such officer or employee, either publicly or privately.*

286.011, Florida Statute

Public meetings and records; public inspection; criminal and civil penalties. Any public officer who violates any provision of this section is guilty of a noncriminal infraction, punishable by fine not exceeding \$500. Any person who is a member of a board or commission who knowingly violates the provisions of this section by attending a meeting not held in accordance with the provisions hereof is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS INVESTIGATION

In March 2017, Mayor Martin requested the SWAT Team do a demonstration at her childrens' school. The SWAT Team showed up at the school 30 minutes late. Mayor

Martin once again misused her position and directed the PSLPD to do a full internal affairs investigation on Sgt. Helseth and the incident. The purpose of an IA is to investigate an officer for misconduct. When the officer admits to making a mistake, the case is closed; the taxpayers should no longer be on the hook for the Mayor's personal investigations for her own gain. Failure to arrive timely at a school for a demonstration does not require an IA as the employee involved admitted their mistake. The chief was directed by Mayor Martin to discipline the staff. Wouldn't it be nice to request the SWAT Team do a demonstration at your kids' school and if they were late you could require a full blown investigation on the taxpayers dime? Mayor Martin picks and chooses which policies she wants to enforce and which do not work for her personal agenda.

Witnesses:
Chief Bolduc
Assistant Chief Vega
Sgt. Steve Helseth

REMODELING BUILDINGS FOR SGT. MARTIN

On or about 2019, Sgt. Martin requested to remodel the CSI building. The estimated cost of which was anticipated at \$25,000, however, based on Sgt. Martin's requests, the final cost was in excess of \$1000,000. The building's remodel would benefit Sgt. Martin's division under his direct supervision.

CITY PAY ADJUSTMENTS

Sgt. Martin's CSI unit received pay adjustments and salary increases in 2022. However, that same privilege was not extended to the command staff who requested a similar adjustment to their pay. Once again, Mayor Martin got her husband's friends a pay raise, but interfered with City management and directed a denial of the request to make sure the command staff did not receive the same benefit.

DISCHARGING A FIREARM

In March 2022, Sgt. Martin unlawfully discharged his firearm in a public building. Mayor Martin once again corruptly misused her public position for a direct benefit by interfering with City staff to ensure her husband was not reprimanded. Sgt. Martin received a "counseling" and no IA was conducted, nor was the matter turned over to the State

Attorney, despite being a crime. The taxpayers paid approximately **\$40,000** to replace the window that Sgt. Martin shot a bullet through. A seasoned officer, a sergeant nonetheless, does not "accidentally" remove his weapon from its holster and pull a trigger on a loaded gun in public. If Sgt. Martin did not knowingly remove the weapon from his holster or if there was an altercation or other circumstance surrounding the discharge, the taxpayers have a right to know about it. If a resident who wasn't married to the Mayor shoots a window out of a City building, the City would sue that resident to be reimbursed for the cost. It's a concept called restitution. I guess those laws don't apply to everyone.

790.15 Discharging firearm in public or on residential property. Any person who knowingly discharges a firearm in any public place or who recklessly or negligently discharges a firearm outdoors on any property used primarily as the site of a dwelling as defined in s. 776.013 or zoned exclusively for residential use commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083.

CONCLUSION

Mayor Martin has, many times, interfered with negotiations regarding her husbands union contract. Again, she, not so secretly or discreetly, misuses her public office to threaten City staff to receive a direct gain. However, City staff are fearful to come forward or file a complaint fearing the repercussions. She bosses around City staff to ensure she gets what she needs from those negotiations, secretly. Anyone can make a records request for public meetings in which these contracts are discussed. In recent weeks, the Mayor has made it clear who she wants to take over the Police Department to best fit her needs. She has made comments to police personnel concerning what mechanism she would use to fire the police chief, despite an impeccable record. Go ahead, ask.

Mayor Martin and Sgt. Martin have vocally expressed a desire to terminate the Police Chief and replace him with their friends. The City should have in place an opportunity to report ethics violations without fear of retaliation. City staff who witness these violations have been fired or your too scared to come forward. This is why it is so easy to have corruption in local government.

Copy:

Megan Lazenby

Kaylie Crumb

Nick Plummer

State Attorney

Florida Department of Law Enforcement

TC Palm Treasure Coast

Russ Blackburn, City Manager

Vice Mayor Jolien Caraballo

Councilman Anthony Bonna

Councilman David Pickett

Councilwoman Stephanie Morgan

West Palm Beach News Channel 25

West Palm Beach News Channel 5

West Palm Beach News Channel 12

West Palm Beach Post

Governor Ron DeSantis

Florida Commission on Ethics

St. Lucie County Sheriff