

DSK Law

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EST. 1976

Ms. Robin Hayes, City Manager
City of Mt. Dora, City Hall
510 North Baker Street,
Mount Dora, Florida 32757

July 1, 2019

Re: Chief John O'Grady Investigation

The firm of DSK Law Group was retained to conduct an independent investigation into allegations that Mount Dora Police Chief/Public Safety Director, John O'Grady has engaged in conduct rising to the level of unlawful harassment and other behaviors which have placed the successful running of these Departments in jeopardy. The investigation included an inquiry into whether Chief O'Grady's command of the Police and Public Safety Departments have been so negatively impacted by Chief O'Grady's conduct that the overall functionality of these Departments have been impaired.

On April 15, 2019, Officer Ivelisse Severance filed an internal complaint against Chief O'Grady. A true and correct copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit "A" Officer Severance stated, in part, that Chief O'Grady's behavior was such that "[t]hey are impacting the City of Mount Dora, MDPD personnel and me personally." Attached to the cover letter, Officer Severance attached a three (3) page document, entitled "HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT COMPLAINT".

Due to the allegations set forth in Officer Severance's complaint, this investigation included a determination of whether Chief O'Grady's conduct was in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §2000-e *et seq.*, and Florida Civil Rights Act §447.01 *et seq.*, *Florida Statutes*. While the allegations of unlawful harassment were unsubstantiated as set forth below, there exists a number of issues of concern.

A list of all individuals interviewed is attached hereto as Schedule "A." The interviews were generally conducted in person and on-site at the Mt. Dora Community Building located at 520 North Baker Street, Mt. Dora, Florida 32757. As part of the investigation, these interviews were conducted over several weeks. As part of the investigation, I reviewed numerous e-mails and documents.

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Discussion/Conclusion

As the initial complaint which, in part, initiated this investigation, is entitled "HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT COMPLAINT", I begin with a discussion of whether Chief O'Grady's conduct rose to the level of unlawful harassment pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, 29 U.S.C. §2000-e *et seq.*, and Florida Civil Rights Act §447.01 *et seq.*, *Florida Statutes*. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Florida Civil Rights Act prohibit discrimination, including harassment related to an employee's protected classification. Protected classification includes, but are not limited to, race, gender, ethnicity, and national origin. Harassment premised upon gender can also encompass sexual harassment.

A. Unlawful Harassment:

A violation of Title VII may be predicated on either of two types of sexual harassment—(1) harassment that involves the conditioning of employment benefits on sexual favors, and (2) harassment that, while not affecting economic benefits, creates a hostile or offensive working environment *Meritor Sav. Bank, FSB v. Vinson*, 477 U.S. 57, 57, 106 S. Ct. 2399, 2400, 91 L. Ed. 2d 49 (1986)

With regard to racial harassment, courts have routinely held that a "mere utterance of an ethnic or racial epithet which engenders offensive feelings in an employee" would not sufficiently alter terms and conditions of employment to violate Title VII). See *Daniels v. Essex Group, Inc.*, 937 F.2d 1264, 1271-1272 (C.A.7 1991); *Davis v. Monsanto Chemical Co.*, 858 F.2d 345, 349 (C.A.6 1988), cert. denied, 490 U.S. 1110, 109 S.Ct. 3166, 104 L.Ed.2d 1028 (1989); *Snell v. Suffolk County*, 782 F.2d 1094, 1103 (C.A.2 1986); 1 B. Lindemann & P. Grossman, *Employment Discrimination Law* 349, and nn. 36-37 (3d ed.1996) (hereinafter Lindemann & Grossman) (citing cases instructing that "[d]iscourtesy or rudeness should not be confused with racial harassment" and that "a lack of racial sensitivity does not, alone, amount to actionable harassment"). See also *Faragher v. City of Boca Raton*, 524 U.S. 775, 787, 118 S. Ct. 2275, 2283, 141 L. Ed. 2d 662 (1998) These standards are imposed to insure that civil rights legislation does not become "a civility code." *Id.*

I do not find that Chief O'Grady engaged in sexual, gender based or racial harassment of Officer Severance as a result of the alleged comments at the April 12, 2019 golf tournament. Even if we accept the worse scenario of Chief O'Grady's comments wherein it is alleged that he said, "You're Puerto Rican, it's the same thing", those comments, alone do not rise to the level of unlawful harassment. While such a comment is racially insensitive, that comment *alone* does not rise to the level of severe or pervasive conduct; a requirement to succeed in a claim for unlawful harassment. Moreover, based upon statements from numerous employees, it appears that Chief O'Grady's objectionable comments were not relegated or limited to any specific gender or race.

With that said, I find that Chief O'Grady likely made a comment similar to that recalled by a former Council member. When I considered the number of attendees who recalled his comments similarly and being equally shocked by them, I am swayed. Of equal importance is that many of those who recalled Chief O'Grady making comments similar to "you're all the same", were unbiased in their opinion of Chief O'Grady. For example, an Officer who has been employed

with the City for approximately one (1) year, was present at the April 12, 2019, golf tournament. He stated that he was sitting at a table when he heard Chief O'Grady call for the sponsor Las Palmas, to approach the front. Chief O'Grady then looked towards Officer Severance and said, "Here come take this, these are your people." Officer Severance responded, "I am Puerto Rican." Officer Grady said, "same thing."

This Officer said that he "was shocked and perplexed" by Chief O'Grady's comments. He said that he looked around and saw that others were also "perplexed." He was matter of fact during his interview and demonstrated that he had no vendetta against Chief O'Grady, nor did he demonstrate dislike of anyone within the Department. Likewise, he expressed an affinity for the Chief and the department.

As I will address in greater detail below, I am also swayed by the numerous employees who spoke of Chief O'Grady's pattern of making insensitive and inappropriate comments. It is apparent that Chief O'Grady has a history of making comments under the guise that he is joking, absent consideration for the effect of his words on others.

B. Insensitive Comments:

An overwhelming number of employees interviewed believe that Chief O'Grady gets pleasure out of making employees uncomfortable and often makes comments at their expense. Telling, was the statement by a newer female employee who detailed an experience wherein Chief O'Grady called her up to his office, telling her to open a package, wherein he diminished her by asking her "whose life was more important?"

It is important to note that this employee was no fan of Officer Severance and therefore she would not have relayed this experience in order to assist Officer Severance with her complaint. In his interaction with this female employee, Chief O'Grady misused his position as Chief to cause anxiety and fear. If Chief O'Grady intentionally sought to berate her, his conduct was unacceptable. If he was not acting to intentionally harm her, but yet, failed to consider how his interaction with her, a fairly young employee, could have had that effect then Chief O'Grady's thought process is equally concerning.

Interestingly, even those who Chief O'Grady identified as being favorable acknowledged that Chief O'Grady routinely makes "unnecessary" comments. They overwhelmingly agreed that many of his comments are not Chief like and do not serve to elevate Officers. Officers are often left questioning whether his shocking comments are serious or not.

I must also point out, however, that numerous interviewees stated that they find Chief O'Grady to be pleasant and had nothing to report with regard to him making objectionable comments or engaging in conduct, which they found concerning. An overwhelming number of these interviewees rarely had contact with Chief O'Grady during the day due to the nature of their job duties or their work schedules.

Chief O'Grady's former Executive Assistant, Debbie Frecht, was very complimentary of Chief O'Grady. She said, "I respect him very much...I can't think of anything bad he's done...He's turned out to be the best Chief I've worked for...He has great vision."

C. Favoritism : Almost all of the Commanders confirmed that Chief O'Grady showed favoritism with employees and at least one employee was allowed to not only abuse sick time, but her supervisor was encouraged by Chief O'Grady to alter her evaluation.

D. Ethical Concerns:

I find the recollection of Officer Severance and another Officer regarding the incident involving the lost puppy as the most credible. Both Officers were consistent in their recollection that Chief O'Grady took possession of a lost puppy, gave the puppy to friends and then refused to return the puppy when the owners came forward. The Officers were consistent in their recollection of Chief O'Grady wanting them to impose penalties on the owners for the purpose of dissuading them from wanting the return of their puppy.

The Officers spoke of being placed in the uncomfortable position of having to pursue what they believed to be protocol; returning the puppy to the rightful owners, and the Chief encouraging them to deprive the family of their puppy so that he could keep it. They and others who had learned of the incident admitted that they lost respect for Chief O'Grady thereafter.

E. Improper Policies and Procedures:

Ride-A-Long Program:

It is undisputed that Chief O'Grady amended the Ride-A-Long program earlier this year to allow for minors, of any age, to participate. While, Chief O'Grady was motivated to help a friend by allowing his High Schooler to ride with Officers, it is concerning that Chief O'Grady would be motivated to make a major change, which could result in liability to the City without consulting with the City Attorney or the Human Resource Department. I confirmed with the City's Human Resource Director and City Attorney that they were unaware of the amended policy.

After our interview, Chief's O'Grady's counsel, G. Clay Morris wrote to inform me that Chief O'Grady had conferred with the City Attorney for input on the parental release to participate in the Ride-A-Long program. He wrote, "[t]he forms including a release of liability were approved by the city attorney." I interviewed City Attorney and she confirmed that not only was she unaware of the amended policy, but having checked her database and e-mails, she had no knowledge of a proposed release.

Harassment Complaint:

In the same vein, as the Ride-A-Long Program, the proper individuals were not made aware of the internal harassment complaint filed by a female Officer against her supervisor. While the

results of an investigation will never be known, Chief O'Grady placed the City in a precarious position in not putting the Human Resource or legal departments on notice (which he admitted)¹ and making his own determination that the complaint was premised on a mere conflict of personalities. I am mindful that at the time of this investigation, the same individual referenced in that complaint is on leave due to allegations of inappropriate conduct in another matter.

Similarly, neither the Human Resource nor legal departments were notified that Chief O'Grady sought to have an employee drug tested and sent to counseling due to an alleged policy violation. These ad hoc decisions were implemented absent the advantage of input from those whose expertise it is to guide the City in making both wise and lawful decisions.

Traffic Stop Mandate:

While I offer no opinion on the efficacy of the traffic stop mandate, the prominent issue with the mandate has to do with Chief O'Grady's message to the Officers, the negative ramifications of the mandate, and the sanctions imposed by Officers for not meeting the required targets.

Chief O'Grady stated that his intention behind implementing the mandate, was to foster improved community relations, however, the overwhelming number of Officers interviewed stated that Chief O'Grady told them that the mandate was being implemented so that he could argue a greater need for funding. Inferring to Officers that this mandate was implemented to contrive a need for funding did little to garner support of the Officers.

In that same vein, Officers almost from the beginning, felt that they were being directed to stop citizens for nominal and petty offenses in an effort to meet these arbitrarily set requirements. Officers stated that it was not uncommon to stop citizens driving five (5) miles over the speed limit and in doing so they were put in a situation where it was more beneficial to avoid stops which may require more time and investigation so as to meet their numbers. The responsibility of developing and communicating a clear message to the Officers and tracking progress fell at the feet of Chief O'Grady. It was a missed opportunity.

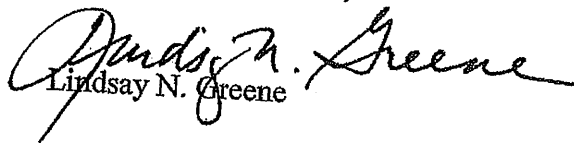
In conclusion, while I found that it is unlikely that Chief O'Grady engaged in unlawful discrimination, I found overwhelming evidence of a Department fraught with distrust and lack of respect for Chief O'Grady's leadership. I find that Chief O'Grady failed to encourage accountability and in doing so stifled comradery, thus breeding discord. Officers spoke of questioning his ethics, judgment, consistency in treatment and mere ability to exhibit kindness. Officers spoke of a Department where a clear vision and mission are lacking and their ability to learn from Chief O'Grady as well as his interest in their ideas and suggestions is non-existent.

¹ Days after his interview, Chief O'Grady's attorney, G. Clay Morris, wrote a letter stating that after some reflection, Chief O'Grady believed that he had shared the complaint with the former Human Resource Director, Ken Bloom and that Mr. Bloom advised him to handle the complaint internally. Mr. Morris' letter does not resolve this matter for the following reasons: 1) Even if Mr. Bloom had advised Chief O'Grady to handle the matter internally, it would have been a matter of public record and placed in the personnel file; 2) Whether handled internally or not, there should have been an investigation or at least an IA, for which it was not. The complainant was never interviewed with regard to the complaint. Finally, I interviewed Mr. Bloom and he said that he does not recall any conversation with Chief O'Grady regarding the Officer's internal complaint, however, he was adamant that he would not have advised Chief O'Grady to handle it internally, as he would have involved the City Manager in any such complaint.

I offer no opinion as to whether to retain Chief O'Grady, however, it is evident that major structural changes may be necessary.

If I may be of further assistance or if you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,


Lindsay N. Greene

Employee Name	Job Class	Employment	Hire Date	Gender	EEOC Code
ALEXANDER, STEPHEN J	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	05/15/2006	Male	White
ANDERSON, NEAL E	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	11/16/2015	Male	White
ANDREANO, JACK	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	04/16/2018	Male	White
ANSCOMB, PAULA R	COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	Full-Time	02/14/2005	Female	White
BAIRD, ROBERT J	RESERVE OFFICER	Part-Time	07/23/2002	Male	White
BAKER, SHEILA C	COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	Full-Time	11/23/1999	Female	White
BARTA, BRIANA P	COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	Full-Time	12/05/2018	Female	White
BEASLEY, KRISTAL	POLICE RECORDS CLERK II/ADMIN	Full-Time	01/26/2015	Female	White
BEECK, BENYAMIN	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	09/15/2017	Male	White
BEL, ROBERT J	DEPUTY CHIEF	Full-Time	10/13/1993	Male	White
BENNETT, CAMERON	RESERVE OFFICER	Part-Time	07/02/2012	Male	White
BLACKWELL, DARLA	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	12/11/2017	Female	White
BLEVINS, CYNTHIA A	ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER	Full-Time	01/05/2004	Female	White
Brian Nadler	Deputy Fire Chief	Full-time		Male	White
BUTLER, ASHLEY D	POLICE RECORDS CLERK	Full-Time	02/11/2019	Female	White
Charles Revel	Electric Utility Director	Full-time		Male	White
COOK, JOSHUA R	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	06/26/2017	Male	White
CORTINAS, SANDRA L	PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE MANAGER	Full-Time	12/27/2005	Female	Hispanic or Latino
DANCEL, KAREN J	POLICE SERGEANT	Full-Time	10/01/2007	Female	Asian
DEERING, CONOR	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	02/09/2015	Male	White
DORRIER, LISA M	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	02/04/2019	Female	White
FECHT, DEBRA J	ADMIN ASST ACCREDITATION MANAGER	Full-Time	04/04/2005	Female	White
FIGUEROA, HECTOR	POLICE SERGEANT	Full-Time	08/31/2009	Male	Hispanic or Latino
GARCIA, MICHAEL	POLICE CORPORAL	Full-Time	08/11/2014	Male	Hispanic or Latino
GREEN, ETHAN	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	07/16/2013	Male	White
GURLEY, CHARLOTTE	COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	Full-Time	04/09/2018	Female	White
Gwen Johns	City Clerk	Full-time		Female	White
HELFANT, ADAM M	POLICE SERGEANT	Full-Time	04/16/2007	Male	White

HOUSE, ANGELA	ADMIN COORDINATOR	Full-Time	05/12/1992	Female	White
HINMAN, KENNETH B	POLICE LIEUTENANT	Full-Time	05/12/1992	Male	White
HOWELL, JESSICA M	POLICE CORPORAL	Full-Time	09/25/2006	Female	White
HUGHES, JAMES E	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	01/08/2018	Male	White
HUNTER, COY J	POLICE CAPTAIN	Full-Time	09/18/2000	Male	Black or African American
HUTCHESON, GARY L	CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICER	Full-Time	07/23/2018	Male	White
Jim Faulkner	IT Director	Full-time		Male	White
JOHNSON, ANGELIA	SCHOOL CROSSING GUARD	Part-Time	10/04/2010	Female	Black or African American
KEMENY, CHRISTA D	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	09/20/2010	Female	White
KRUEGER, ELIZABETH A	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	05/14/2018	Female	White
MCCRACKEN, BRIAN P	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	06/12/2018	Male	White
MCCULLOCH, ADAM G	POLICE CORPORAL	Full-Time	08/02/2010	Male	White
Merry Lovein	Executive Assistant	Full-time		Female	White
O GRADY, JOHN	PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR	Full-Time	02/25/2013	Male	White
PARDO, JUAN C	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	04/02/2018	Male	Hispanic or Latino
POLLIDORE, DEJA SIMON	POLICE RECORDS CLERK	Full-Time	01/02/2019	Female	Black or African American
REVELS, JESSICA	COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	Full-Time	07/29/2013	Female	White
RICE, ANDREW	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	01/26/2015	Male	Black or African American
RUDOWSKIE, MARK	ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR	Part-time			
ROBERTS, CODY N	RESERVE OFFICER	Part-Time	02/11/2019	Male	White
Robin Hayes	City Manager	Full-time			
SCHAEFFLEIN, ALIVIA J	POLICE OPERATIONS ADM ASST	Part-Time	02/11/2019	Female	White
SCOTT, DAVID L	ADMIN. SERVICE BUREAU COMMANDER	Full-Time	03/30/2009	Male	White
SEVERANCE, IVELISSE	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	02/04/2008	Female	Hispanic or Latino
SMITH, ANGEL A R	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	01/03/2011	Female	White
Steve Painter	Deputy Fire Chief	Part-Time			
STRYKOWSKI, BARRY J	POLICE SERGEANT	Full-Time	08/02/2010	Male	White
TAYLOR, KEITH A	POLICE SERGEANT	Full-Time	07/02/2001	Male	White
THIBODEAU, RANDALL J	POLICE CORPORAL	Full-Time	03/11/2013	Male	White

Tim Griner									
UVALL, VICTOR	Fire Chief								
VAUGHN, JENNIFER J	POLICE CAPTAIN	Full-time				Male	White		
Vince Sandersfeld	COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER	Full-Time	06/27/2014			Male	Hispanic or Latino		
WADE, WILLIAM E	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	08/29/2011			Female	White		
WARFORD, NATHANAEAL	Planning Director	Full-Time	05/06/2013			Male	White		
	POLICE SERGEANT	Full-time				Male	White		
WHITE, DONALD B	POLICE OFFICER	Full-Time	04/26/1997			Male	White		
YOUNG, STEVEN L	POLICE SERGEANT	Full-Time	01/13/2014			Male	White		
		Full-Time	09/11/2018			Male	White		
		Full-Time	06/06/2005			Male	White		

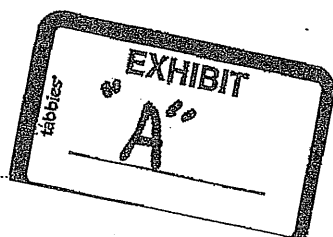
April 15, 2019

MEMORANDUM TO: Sharon Kraynik, Director, Human Resources
SUBJECT: Hostile Work Environment – MDPD

Please see the attached Hostile Work Environment complaint that I am filing against Chief John O'Grady, MDPD. I trust you will take my complaints very seriously. As I have previously reported to the City Manager, Robin Hayes, there are significant issues in the police department that need to be addressed. They are impacting the City of Mount Dora, MDPD personnel, and me personally. I want those impacting me on the record for review and action.


Ivelisse Severance

cc: Robin Hayes, City Manager



HOSTILE WORK ENVIRONMENT COMPLAINT

I, Ivelisse Severance, have been an MDPD officer since February 4, 2008. I am the recipient of multiple awards, commendations and recognitions for outstanding service over my 11+ years here.

I am filing a hostile work environment complaint against Chief John O'Grady. A hostile work environment is one in which intimidation, threatening gestures, and abusive practices create an often fearful environment that makes it difficult or uncomfortable for a person to perform their job duties. The background for my complaint is outlined below and covers myriad issues.

The most recent incident occurred on Friday, April 12 and was clearly ethnically insensitive and offensive. It was humiliating to me in front of an audience of approximately 70 people at the Country Club of Mount Dora. (A list of attendees is attached.) In an era when police officers are being subjected to harassment due to ethnicity, it could not be more inappropriate for a Chief of Police to insult an officer in a public forum. And his comments are not just insulting to me. They are offensive to everyone, especially minority citizens.

The case in point is as follows. The Chief was presenting awards to those who supported the Mount Dora Heroes Foundation golf tournament. When the Cuban owner of Las Palmas Cuban Restaurant was not present to accept her certificate, the Chief said loudly, in front of a large audience, something to the effect that "Ivy you are Puerto Rican, or whatever, so you can accept this for her." There was an audible gasp in the room. I felt instant pain and humiliation. He then said "What? Did I say something wrong?" Several people approached me after the event and apologized to me for the Chief's remarks.

His comment implied that because we are both Hispanic, we are all the same. I think he muttered something to that effect. On my way to the podium, I said "She is Cuban. I am Puerto Rican. We are not all the same." This level of ethnic insensitivity is totally inappropriate and unacceptable, especially for a person in charge of a diverse workforce. This demonstrates clear racial bias on the part of the Director of Public Safety and the Chief of Police. He is a person for whom I should have respect but I do not. I felt publicly stereotyped with callous disregard.

In addition, at the same event, Mayor Girone had collected \$335 for the Heroes Foundation. He gave it to the Chief who called me forward to take possession of it. When he handed it to me, he said "This is for you for showing up to work today." This was a direct reference to an incident with another officer, Cpl. Howell, on Tuesday, April 9. We were having a heated discussion about my work and upcoming leave schedule. She said that she was behind in her work. I told her that she wouldn't be behind if she showed up for work. She calls in sick regularly. I was informed that the officer reported this conversation to Chief O'Grady and I am sure it was the basis for his snide comment to me in a public forum.

One day prior, on Thursday, April 11, I was in a meeting with Chief O'Grady, several MDPD officers and a teacher and the Principal of the Triangle Elementary School. We were discussing a summer camp program. I had not been able to complete a flyer because I did not receive the logo from the school until the night before. When I explained that it was not finished, Chief O'Grady made remarks about how everyone knew Cpl. Howell was the best and was amazing and that I was "slacking." I was embarrassed and believe his remarks

before my peers, the school principal and teacher were insulting, unethical, inappropriate and certainly not based on any factual evidence.

Background: This behavior is the tip of the iceberg and a few examples (not all inclusive) of the reasons behind it are described below. He has progressively behaved in an insensitive manner toward me and the behavior has become more and more pronounced. I am not the only MDPD officer who has complained about misconduct on the part of Chief O'Grady. The City Manager, Robin Hayes, has been aware of many of them for over a year. Thus far, I am unaware of evidence that she has addressed any of them or plans to do so.

November 10, 2017 I was working at the Mount Dora Middle School as an SRO. A small puppy dog came up to me. I put him in my car and drove around the area looking for the owner. I inquired with several residents but nobody could identify the owner so I took it to the Police Department. Chief O'Grady saw the dog and decided to take it home while waiting for the owner to report it missing.

On Saturday, November 11, an MDPD dispatcher called me to indicate the owners of the puppy came to the station looking for the dog. They had been told that an officer took it to the station. I texted Chief O'Grady to inform him the owners were looking for the dog. He indicated he had given the dog to a friend of the family. They had recently lost their dog and he said the puppy would be better taken care of as it was obvious the current owners could not take care of it.

On Monday, November 13, Chief O'Grady spoke with Animal Control Officer Cynthia Blevins. She was upset and came to me. She said that the Chief told her to issue a citation to the dog owners to pressure them to release the dog to PD. He also asked me to find any code enforcement violations that could be used to pressure the owners to release the dog.

I informed the Lieutenant Uvalle over Community Services Bureau and Animal Control of the incident. I told him to get the Chief off my back and that I would not lie for him so he could steal a dog from a family. The Lieutenant spoke with the Chief and advised him to return the dog to avoid being caught in a scandal. The Lieutenant Hunter over Patrol was tasked to drive to Maitland to pick up the dog which was reunited with his family.

This incident was reported to City Manager Robin Hayes in my 1st meeting with her in early 2018.

November 2018 I encountered Chief O'Grady in the hallway shortly after my office was moved from the 1st floor to a space on the same floor as the Chief and Deputy Chief Bell. He said "You're Bell's girl." I did not know what he meant and did not appreciate being referred to as anyone's "girl." I asked him what he meant and he said "Bell wanted you here. He got you that office." In fact, I was moved because they needed my prior office for a Fire Department employee to have easier access to FD administration.

Days later, I was pushing a cart through the sally port to put things in my patrol car. Three officers were in the sally port. One officer made a comment about me being Bell's buddy. I ignored it but later approached the officer in his office and asked him why he made the remark. He retracted the comment by saying that I am one of Bell's friends because Bell calls me on the phone and talks to me. I said that was because I get things done when he asks me to do something. I had a similar conversation with Cpt. Vic Uvalle.

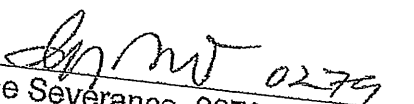
I believe the comments stem from Chief O'Grady's initial comment in the hallway and I wonder what is being said behind closed doors among male officers. I do not feel appreciated for the hard work I do and the success I achieve. I feel like they think they can joke about me because I am a female and Chief O'Grady set the example.

December 18, 2018 I met again with Robin Hayes. She asked if things were better at PD after Ofc. St. Francis Smith resigned. I said "no" and that we were losing more employees and officers. I advised her that, in my opinion, Chief O'Grady was out of control and that eventually something was going to happen. Chief O'Grady saw me leave her office when the meeting was over. I have no doubt that he sensed that I was discussing PD issues with the City Manager.

January - February 2019 An issue arose regarding overtime pay for officers staffing the annual African American Festival. Chief O'Grady only wanted to pay OT to the School Resource Officers of the Community Relations Unit - and none to the 3 additional officers in the unit. He wanted the 3 of us to "flex" the event - not get paid for it but take time off. The event has always been funded from the City's Special Events budget. All other city employees were getting paid from the Special Events fund budgeted for this event. After considerable discussion with multiple parties, all officers received Special Events pay. I sensed that the Chief did not like that I intervened and pushed for the pay due to us under the FOP contract. I am the FOP secretary.

February 4, 2019 I said good morning directly to Chief O'Grady in the presence of several officers and employees. He completely ignored me. I felt his animosity increasing. Despite that, in early February, he called me 3-4 times a week (including my day off on Sunday) over a two week period to translate with his home landscapers to insure they understood his instructions. They spoke Spanish and so do I.

SUMMARY I believe that I have been discriminated against because of my race and gender. I believe Chief O'Grady has created a hostile work environment in MDPD whereby women and minorities are targets for jokes and disrespect. All Hispanics are not alike. I am nobody's "girl" and should never have been addressed as such by Chief O'Grady, evoking similar comments and a loss of respect from my peers. This kind of behavior is unacceptable and unprofessional and is the result of a lack of leadership. It starts at the top of any organization.


Ivelisse Severance 0279
Community Relations Officer
Mount Dora Police Department

List of Attendees at MDHF Golf Tournament Banquet

Mount Dora City Officials/Employees

- ✓ City Mayor Nick Girone and his Personal Advisor
- ✓ City Councilman John Tucker
- ✓ Former City Mayor Melissa DeMarco
- ✓ Director of Leisure Services Amy Jewell
- ✓ Animal Control Officer Cindy Blevins
- ✓ Code Enforcement Officer Gary Hutcheson
- ✓ Deputy Chief Bell's Assistant – Alivia Rehn
- ✓ Sgt. Steve Young
- ✓ Detective Mike Vaughn

John O'Grady's Team

- John O'Grady
- ✓ Amy Jewell
- ✓ Lou Tanzi
- ✗ Kim Wilson

Main Street Leasing Team

- ✓ Larry Baker
- ✓ Barb Bergin
- ✓ Ntengwa Mukosa

In Honor of Sheriff Chris Daniels

- ✓ Joe Caggiano
- ✓ Dale Logue
- ✓ Gary Berg
- ✓ Tom Wigle

Anderson Landscape/Lawn Care (Anderson Heroes)

- ✓ Gary Anderson
- ✓ Bill Osborne
- ✓ Dave Harmon

G3 Development

- ✓ Gerry Guenther
- ✓ Austin Guenther
- ✓ Jake Guenther
- ✓ Wyatt Smith

Estate Jewelry Company

- ✓ David Berndt
- ✓ Dr. Karen C. Parker
- ✓ George Mattson
- ✓ Sonia Hutchinson

Target

- ✓ Don Shroeder
- ✓ Lisa Vitrano
- ✓ Daniel Munoz
- ✓ Edward Bowes

Vedder Holsters

- ✓ Patch Paff
- ✓ David Boatright
- ✓ Nick Connel
- ✓ Marshal Wood

Vedder Holsters

- ✓ Mike Vedder
- ✓ Cory Adkins
- ✓ Garrett Griswold
- ✓ Alex Vells

Vedder Holsters

- ✓ Mike Couto
- ✓ Joseph Laguardia
- ✓ Pat Theobald
- ✓ Thomas Vergara

Tommy Gun

- ✓ Robert Bickford

Waste Management

- ✓ Steven Fisher
- ✓ Eric Sheen
- ✓ Joe Hall
- ✓ Zane Hall

United Southern Bank

- ✓ Allan Seabrook
- ✓ Rob Adrid
- ✓ Greg Lewis
- ✓ Andy Parker

L.C.S.O.

- ✓ Keith Sommer
- ✓ Andrew Patten
- ✓ Harrison Babb
- ✓ Matt Nealon

Cat Boat Adventures

- ✓ Steve Kilojeskie
- ✓ Michael Moecker
- ✓ Ron Hanna

DG Promotions

- ✓ Mike Welter
- ✓ Greg Furnas
- ✓ Bob Welter
- ✗ Al (unknown last name)

Dr. Phone Fix

- ✓ Jim Machamer
- ✓ Bob Cisney
- ✓ Bruce Elwell
- ✓ Buddy Garner