



Spokane County Sheriff's Citizens Advisory and Review Board

December 14, 2015

Councilman Pace:

Your email dated July 13, 2015 to Mark Calhoun (Deputy City Manager) and other related emails have been brought to our attention from Sheriff Knezovich for our review. The correspondence was handed out to Sheriff Citizen Advisory Review Board Members at the meeting on September 14, 2015. No further instructions were given at that time.

These items were included on our agenda of October 12, 2015 for discussion. Due to a full agenda, the board was unable to address your issues. At our meeting of November 9, 2015, a lengthy discussion ensued about the events the evening of 7/9/15. We also received a briefing from Spokane Valley Police Precinct Commander, Matt Lyons who has expended numerous hours on this investigation.

To summarize these events, you were at this meeting of the Spokane County Constitutional Republicans (SCCR) to discuss the recent town hall meeting of 6/29/15, held at Central Valley High School. This event was sponsored by the Republicans of Spokane County and featured a presentation by Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich.

During the meeting of 7/9/15 you indicated two (2) Spokane Valley police vehicles were in the parking lot and noticed by participants of your meeting which as you stated, "caused quite a buzz around the room." Participants felt they were being monitored because of your agenda discussing the Sheriff. An email was sent to you on behalf of several people at this meeting, outlining various events occurring in the parking lot.

Accusations were made alleging illegal use of body cameras to video license plates of vehicles in the lot that were at your meeting. In addition it was reported that dash cams on the patrol vehicles were being utilized to zoom into the meeting room and capture folks in the room. You also indicated these were perceptions you heard from several people at your meeting and also requested the names of the officers and their purpose for being in the lot.

Facts: Based on this correspondence that is now public record, the outlined alleged activities by the officers, and the Internal Investigation completed by Lt. Lyons, we felt it to be appropriate to weigh-in with our thoughts:

1) We take these allegations very seriously and if found to be true, find violations of SCSO Policy #439, State Law RCW 43.43.762, and Federal Law 28 CFR 23.20 (b). In addition as Lt. Lyons pointed out, the "inferred allegation is directed specifically at Spokane County Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich in that he had directed an illegal, intelligence gathering operation on the Spokane County Constitutional Republicans for political purposes."

2) Chief VanLeuven followed up with the Spokane Valley Precinct Commander, Matt Lyons. Lt. Lyon's investigation I/A #2015-0065 showed two (2) officers (Lawhorn-B506 and Petersen-B505) dispatched to a domestic violence call at Moore and Valleyway, about 1100 feet from Shari's at 1908 hours. They arrived at the call at 1912 hrs and cleared at 1920 hrs. They then stopped at the Shari's parking lot to discuss the call. At 1934 hrs (14 minutes later) they were dispatched to another call at Wal-Mart.



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This information was verified by Lt. Lyons and the CAD report. Deputy Petersen reports he "did" get out of his vehicle to retrieve something from the back, but denies walking around the lot or making any contact with other civilians.

3) Per City Manager Mr. Mark Calhoun, he summarized events in his email to Chief VanLeuven, adding the two police vehicles were parked in the Shari's lot for about 45 minutes.

Findings:

1) We find that the deputies were in the Shari's parking lot, based on CAD reports, of no longer than 16 minutes, which is considerably less than the alleged 45 minutes.

2) SCSO deputies are not equipped with "body worn" cameras, likewise SCSO vehicles are not equipped with "in car" cameras.

3) Interviews were conducted with Captain Dave Ellis, Director of Intelligence SCSO, Chief Rick VanLeuven, Chief Spokane Valley Police Department, Sheriff Ozzie Knezovich, Deputy Dave Lawhorn, and Deputy Lamont Petersen. Each denies any operation to gather intelligence on the SCCR. They likewise did not direct anyone to gather intelligence, or is unaware of any reason that the SCCR would be of interest to law enforcement.

4) An independent witness contradicts the observations described by the sole witness, Mr. Rodriguez. When notified of the fact that his description of Deputy Lawhorn was inaccurate and actions independently determined to also be inaccurate, Rodriguez admitted that he must have mistaken a random citizen for a deputy and apologized.

5) The alleged incident along with subsequent investigations was forwarded to the Spokane County Prosecutor for their review. Per Spokane County Prosecutor Larry Haskell the incident was closed and no further recommendation given.

It is the finding of this board this incident did not occur as portrayed in your initial email. The investigation into this incident revealed no indication that Spokane County Sheriff, Ozzie Knezovich, nor any members of the SCSO were involved in any surveillance or intelligence gathering on the members of the SCCR.

If additional facts are presented or there is any footage of the alleged incident, this board would be more than happy to revisit any considerations of wrongdoing. Until that time we find this matter closed and alleged parties exonerated of any inappropriate behavior or wrong-doings in accordance with applicable laws.

Respectfully submitted,

Spokane County Sheriff Citizen Advisory and Review Board



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Cc:

Sheriff, Ozzie Knezovich

Spokane Valley Police Chief, Rick VanLeuven

City Manager, Mike Jackson

Mayor, Dean Grafos

Council Members:

Arne Woodard

Rod Higgins

Chuck Hafner

Ben Wick

Bill Gothmann