

Inv. LaRette,

Exhibit 554

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss the accusations that you had mismanaged or falsely reported your time. As you know, I read through the report of the independent investigator that we hired to learn the facts regarding this situation. I have also read your letter on the subject. Through this report, discussions with the investigator and your supervisors, and a discussion with you and your representatives, I believe that the preponderance of the evidence shows that you have violated the following policies:

Superior Police Department Policy 320: Standards of Conduct

320.5.1 LAWS, RULES AND ORDERS

- a) Violation of, or ordering or instructing a subordinate to violate any policy, procedure, rule, order, directive, requirement or failure to follow instructions contained in department or City manuals.
- b) Disobedience of any legal directive or order issued by any department member of a higher rank.
- c) Violation of federal, state, or local or administrative laws, rules or regulations.

320.5.5 ATTENDANCE

- a) Leaving the job to which the member is assigned during duty hours without reasonable excuse and proper permission and approval.
- b) Unexcused or unauthorized absence or tardiness.
- c) Excessive absenteeism or abuse of leave privileges.
- d) Failure to report to work or to the place of assignment at the time specified and fully prepared to perform duties without reasonable excuse.

During your time working on the task force in Duluth, your day-to-day work was largely unsupervised. Several technologies provide evidence of your day-to-day activities, including your secure door entries and exits, your computer log on, and certain digital investigative tools. While I concede that these tools provide evidence of when you are working and do not necessarily prove that you are not working outside the times indicated, you have been unable to account for your time, by testimony or other evidence, outside of the times indicated by these technological devices. The times themselves also imply an absence or tardiness from work. I was especially concerned by several door entries that occurred a few minutes or a few hours after your reported work time. Because you have not been able to account for what you were doing during these times between your reported start and your entry into the building, and especially since many of these gaps were too short to permit any meaningful work, I am forced to conclude that you demonstrated a lax attitude towards your work schedule which resulted in unexcused absences and tardiness and possibly falsification of your time sheet and theft of time.

You were instructed by both your Superior and Duluth supervisors to report changes in your schedule to your supervisor in Superior. While you claimed that this policy was unnecessarily strict and only imposed recently, these were nonetheless lawful orders, and you did not formally contest them with your chain of command or through the grievance procedure.

These policy violations are serious and merit discipline. I cannot find evidence that you have received any formal discipline on this or any other subject in the past and your Duluth supervisor reports that your work has been acceptable, if not better, during this period. Previous violations of these policies by other officers have resulted in unpaid suspension for a first offense. When I have intervened with my direct subordinates on similar issues, I have generally begun with a verbal warning.

Based on all these factors, I have decided to issue you this written warning, which I will maintain in your supervisory file. This is significantly more lenient than these violations deserve, and I am only willing to limit discipline in this matter because you have convinced me that you take this matter seriously and are unlikely to violate our policies again. Your positive work history and reputation as a skilled and committed police officer also merits leniency for this first offense. I am unwilling to compromise your career or your previous dedication through strict discipline unless absolutely necessary. If, however, you commit other violations in the future, I will insist on skipping steps on the disciplinary ladder and implementing much more severe sanctions.