

PROBABLE CAUSE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

CASE NO. 002-150-08-21

1. Alphonso Forrest is multi-certified (Basic Law Enforcement, Radar Operator, Lidar (Laser) Operator, Jailer, and Juvenile Correctional Officer).
2. Officer Forrest was employed with the most recent law enforcement unit from 06/01/2021 until he was terminated on 08/10/2021.
3. Officer Forrest is not currently employed by a law enforcement unit.
4. Officer Forrest did submit a response to this investigation (see Attachment A).

CASE SUMMARY

Officer Forrest was employed with the Richmond County Sheriff's Office from 03/29/2014 until he resigned on 05/17/2021. He was re-employed at the Snellville Police Department on 06/01/2021.

On 07/29/2021, an article was published in Richmond County that suggested an unnamed Deputy was a "person of interest" in a murder that occurred in Richmond County in 2020. The article stated the Deputy had left the Richmond County Sheriff's Office due to the investigation. A friend forwarded a link to the article to Officer Forrest on Facebook. Officer Forrest commented on the Facebook post and revealed he was the unnamed Deputy. He denied any involvement with the homicide.

On 08/03/2021, Officer Forrest notified Snellville PD Lieutenant Pendleton that he had been contacted by Richmond County Detectives in reference to the news article.

On 08/04/2021, Snellville PD initiated an internal investigation into the allegation that Officer Forrest was a person of interest in a homicide.

During the internal investigation it was discovered Officer Forrest had been involved in two separate criminal investigations that he had not divulged during his hiring process. One involved him being charged as a juvenile with inappropriate touching of a child.

Officer Forrest was also the subject of a four-month long investigation in 2018 related to allegations of child abuse and/or molestation involving his six-year-old daughter. The child's mother had sent several photographs of the child to various agencies with allegations of abuse. The Department of Family and Children Services conducted an investigation along with the Sheriff's Office. Officer Forest was cleared of the allegations and maintained full custody of his daughter.

The pre-employment and pre-polygraph questionnaires completed by Officer Forrest were reviewed. It was determined Officer Forrest had learned of his involvement in the homicide investigation on 07/29/2021 and therefore would not have been aware of that investigation when he completed the hiring process between April and June of 2021.

The pre-employment questionnaire asked, "Do you have anything significant in your background that you have not disclosed in your application or in this interview?" Officer Forrest answered "No – all in app and discussed in interview." Officer Forrest did

not mention the 2018 Child Abuse/Molestation investigation during the interview or on the application.

In the pre-employment polygraph questionnaire, Officer Forrest answered "Yes" to the following two questions:

"Have you ever been arrested or been the subject of a criminal complaint or indictment or been required to appear as a suspect or defendant in any criminal (including juvenile) proceeding or before any prosecuting officer or investigative agency?"

"Have you ever been convicted or pled guilty or pled nolo contendere to a felony crime?"

"Have you ever been questioned by the Police as a suspect in a crime?"

In the explanation section Officer Forrest wrote "When I was a juvenile, I was accused of touching my cousin inappropriately. I was found not guilty."

Officer Forrest had not disclosed the juvenile arrest to the Snellville Police Department during the pre-employment interviews or application.

On 08/05/2021, Officer Forrest was interviewed by the internal investigator. Officer Forrest was questioned about him being named as a person of interest in the homicide of a transgender person in 2020. Officer Forrest stated he had no idea why he was named as a person of interest and that he had nothing to do with the homicide.

Officer Forrest was questioned about his reason for leaving Richmond County. Officer Forrest said he had gone through a mental episode and had been hospitalized out of state for three weeks. When he returned, he was assigned to the Transportation instead of Patrol. Officer Forrest said the assignment caused him to lose money so he decided to leave. (This contradicted what Officer Forrest had stated on his employment application. He had said he left Richmond County to follow his fiancé to Atlanta).

At that point Officer Forrest also described the child molestation investigation that he had not included on his pre-employment application, had not disclosed during his pre-employment interview, nor during his pre-employment polygraph interview.

As a part of the internal investigation, Officer Forrest was required to submit to another polygraph examination. On 08/06/2021, during the pre-polygraph interview, Officer Forrest revealed he suffered from depression due to the murder of his uncle in 2009. Officer Forrest stated he had voluntarily entered a mental health facility in Maryland in early 2021 for twenty-one days.

On 08/08/2021, the polygraph report stated officer Forrest showed "physiological reactions" to the questions about why he left Richmond County, his involvement in a homicide, his being deceitful during the employment process, and him being untruthful during the internal investigation. The polygraph examiner stated his findings were inconclusive because of "the mental state and self-admitted and medically diagnosed depression by Mr. Forrest."

On 08/09/2021, Richmond County was contacted in reference to the child abuse investigation. Richmond County personnel confirmed there had been an investigation and that it was closed as "Unfounded."

The internal investigation concluded Officer Forrest had violated the following policies: Conduct Unbecoming On/Off Duty, Fraudulent Application, and City of Snellville Personnel Rules and Regulations – Disciplinary Action.

On 08/10/2021, Officer Forrest was terminated as a Provisional (probationary) employee for the policy violations.

POST Investigator Goodyear contacted Officer Forrest through his attorney Kevin Almeroth and arranged an interview for 12/06/2021. POST Investigator Sparks also attended the interview.

During the interview, Officer Forrest admitted he had failed to disclose the 2018 Child Abuse investigation to Snellville Police during the hiring process. Officer Forrest added that his child's mother had falsely accused him of child abuse. Officer Forrest said he also suspected his child's mother was the person who had contacted the news agency that published the article falsely naming him as a person of interest in the homicide. Officer Forrest said he did not know about the homicide investigation during the hiring process and therefore could not have failed to disclose that information. He did however admit he did not disclose the child abuse investigation. Officer Forrest said he thought the 2018 investigation was closed and Snellville PD would find out about it if they contacted Richmond County in a background investigation.

Officer Forrest volunteered that in 2021, he became depressed over the murder of his uncle in 2009. Officer Forrest said he went to a mental health facility in Maryland for twenty-one days for treatment for his mental health in February 2021.

Officer Forrest was questioned about his answers to the pre-polygraph questionnaire that revealed he had "been convicted or pled guilty or pled nolo contendere to a felony crime." Officer Forrest admitted he had been charged as a juvenile for inappropriately touching his cousin. Officer Forrest said he was fifteen years old at the time and his cousin would have been five or six. Investigator Goodyear asked Officer Forrest why he stated in the pre-polygraph questionnaire that he "was found not guilty" but answered "yes" to the "been convicted or pled guilty or pled nolo contendere to a felony crime" question. Officer Forrest appeared very evasive in his answers and Investigator Goodyear asked several questions to clarify whether he had been charged, arrested, or convicted of a felony or any crime. Eventually, Officer Forrest agreed he had been arrested as a juvenile for inappropriately touching his cousin and Officer Forrest said he had pled Nolo Contendere to a molestation charge in a "Juvenile Tribunal."

Investigator Goodyear had pulled the applications for POST certifications that had been completed by Officer Forrest for his Juvenile Correctional Officer certification in 2012, his Jailer certification in 2014, his Peace Officer certification in 2014 and his Peace Officer recertification in 2019. In each of those POST applications, Officer Forrest had answered "no" to the question "Has the candidate ever been arrested?" Investigator Goodyear asked Officer Forrest why he answered "no" in all the POST applications but answered "yes" in the Snellville pre-polygraph questionnaire. Officer Forrest said he had not been taken to jail as a juvenile. Investigator Goodyear explained that juveniles are not taken to jail but a charge on a juvenile complaint form is considered an arrest for a juvenile. Investigator Goodyear explained that Officer Forrest was a veteran police officer and should know that his juvenile charge was an arrest. Officer Forrest admitted he knew that his charge was an arrest.

Investigator Goodyear told Officer Forrest that he would have to provide the investigation report and court documents related to the juvenile arrest before the POST investigation could be completed. Officer Forrest's attorney, Mr. Almeroth, agreed to

obtain the documents related to the juvenile arrest and provide those to Investigator Goodyear.

On 12/22/2021, Mr. Almeroth sent an email to Investigator Goodyear that contained the court disposition records for Officer Forrest from the Richmond County Juvenile Court. The records showed that on 09/24/2008, in response to a petition alleging Officer Forrest was Delinquent/Unruly, the judge found Officer Forrest guilty of Sexual Battery (Misd) "after clear and convincing evidence that said child is in need of supervision, treatment or rehabilitation." Officer Forrest was placed on probation for a period of six months.

Mr. Almeroth added that he had not been able to obtain any reports from Richmond County that would explain the original offense that led to the conviction. Mr. Almeroth said he received a follow-up call from an investigator and was hoping to receive more comprehensive results. Mr. Almeroth stated he would notify Investigator Goodyear if or when he was able to get additional information.

As of the date of this report, no additional information has been obtained.

CRIMINAL HISTORY

None

VIOLATION

It is hereby asserted this individual is in violation of the following sections of O.C.G.A. 35-8-7.1 (a)(2),(6),(7),(8),(11) as attached:

In accordance with O.C.G.A. 35-8-7.1 (b) (1), the Probable Cause Committee makes the following recommendations to the Council:

Chairman, Probable Cause Committee
Date:

Chairman, P.O.S.T. Council
Date: