

Preface:

The following provides documentation in reference to Capt. Richard Hunter, employee of the Rabun County Sheriff's Office.

History:

- July 2019- Chief Deputy Mark Jones brought to my attention complaints he had been receiving from subordinates of Capt. Richard Hunter with the complaints centered around excessive alcohol use after normal working office hours by Capt. Hunter. The patrol captain's position requires one to be on call at all times to allow his subordinates to contact him for guidance when a question arises. Thus, requiring one to be sober and of sound judgement when giving guidance. The complaints ranged from not answering the phone at all leading them to have to call Chief Deputy Mark Jones for guidance. Complaints received were from subordinates calling Capt. Hunter and him answering the phone intoxicated and also Capt. Hunter calling the subordinates while intoxicated.
- July 30,2019- I, Sheriff Nichols, requested Capt. Richard Hunter to come to my office where we discussed these complaints. These issues were addressed and a Professional Development Plan was initiated for Capt. Hunter. The plan provided examples of behaviors that would not be tolerated from this point moving forward as well as possible disciplinary actions if committed again. (See attached letter of evidence titled Professional Development Plan) The plan was accepted by Capt. Hunter and an EAP was contacted and started. Capt. Hunter contacted the EAP which led him to contacting a local counseling firm in Clarkesville for an alcohol evaluation and any recommended treatment. Capt. Hunter took the assessment and no further treatment was recommended.
- June 6, 2020- Chief Deputy Mark Jones made contact with me in the Sheriff's Office parking lot and stated that he had to tell me something and it was bad. In summary, Chief Deputy Jones explained that he was contacted by one of Captain Hunter's subordinates on June 5, 2020 wishing to turn in his resignation. The subordinate advised Chief Deputy Jones that on the night of June 4 he had contacted Capt. Hunter to offer his side-by-side atv for an upcoming detail June 6. The subordinate advised that he could tell Capt. Hunter was intoxicated and the conversation's focus turned to the subordinate's wife. The subordinate stated that Capt. Hunter told him that he needed to go home and give his wife a full body massage. The subordinate advised that Capt. Hunter told him that he was going to call his wife and the subordinate asked him not to because his kids were with his wife. After the call ended, the subordinate called his wife and told her Captain Hunter would be calling and as he did the subordinate's wife merged the call so all three parties were on the call. The subordinate told him again his kids were in the car and

advised Capt. Hunter asked numerous times if the kids were still in the car. Once the kids were out of the car, Capt. Hunter told the subordinate that he needed to give his wife a full body massage and the subordinate told him that he had to work on his porch because they are fixing to list their home with a realtor. It was advised that Capt. Hunter told him to stay at home and invited his wife to come down and he would give her a full body massage. The subordinate advised that he also made a comment that his wife needed to come down and meet his wife. Although nothing sexual was explicitly stated they both felt that was the intentions from the conversation and it made them uncomfortable. As the conversation ended, Captain Hunter advised he was going to go to bed. (See Internal Affairs Documentation)

- It has been advised by two employees that Capt. Hunter has recently talked to them while under the influence of alcohol after his normal working hours.
- The above incident happened while all parties were off duty.

Negligent Duties:

- Captain Richard Hunter failed to follow directives set forth in his Professional Development Plan date July 30,2019.
- Captain Hunter continued to have contact with subordinates while under the influence of alcohol.
- Captain Hunter made inappropriate comments via cellphone (voicecall) to his subordinate and his subordinate's spouse.
- Captain Hunter used his county issued cell phone to make the above-mentioned comments.

Summary of Evidence:

- Banks County Sheriff's Office was requested to conduct an independent IAI. (The BCSO IAI Case Summary and Findings are attached.)
- Violated the Professional Development Plan as agreed to on July 30,2019.
- Violated General Order 1.02 – Code of Conduct, 1.03 - Code of Ethics, 2.04 - Workplace Violence, Prohibited Acts

Results of External Review:

- Because of the negligent conduct of Captain Richard Hunter he was demoted to a deputy, transferred to the detention center, and is assigned to the inmate work detail crew. Deputy Hunter will also have to complete training on ethics and professionalism, sexual harassment/diversity training, and review applicable policies.

