

ILLINOIS STATE POLICE
INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

Case Number 20-39131000766	Case Title SHELBY COUNTY	Report Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Location <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle			
Report Purpose INTERVIEW OF ERICA FIRNHABER. ORIGIN OF EXHIBIT 4		Report Date 06/18/2020	Activity Date 06/17/2020		
Lead Number	Drug Buys	Arrest Warrants	Search Warrants	Overhear Admin	Overhear Warrant
Reporting Agent SMIT, JENNIFER		D Number 6725		Zone/Office ISPZ5CP	
Case Agent SMIT, JENNIFER		Case Agent ID Number 6725		Case Agent Zone/Office ISPZ5CP	
NARRATIVE					

SYNOPSIS:

In December of 2019, Erica Firmhaber, the Shelby County Treasurer, contacted the Division of Criminal Investigations, Zone 5, to report possible theft of money through the Shelby County payroll system by several employees of Shelby County. Firmhaber also mentioned possible illegal firearms transaction of seized firearms conducted by the Sheriff's Office in 2018. In April, 2020, Firmhaber provided additional documentation regarding the alleged theft through the payroll system.

The purpose of this report is to document the interview of Erica E. Firmhaber (F/W, DOB: [REDACTED]).

DETAILS:

On Wednesday, June 17, 2020, I (Special Agent J. Smit #6725) and Trooper B. Schlouch (#6818), interviewed Erica Firmhaber at the Shelby County Treasurer's Office (301 E. Main St, Shelbyville, Illinois). Firmhaber consented to the interview being audio recorded. The interview began at approximately 10:19am.

The following is a synopsis of the interview and should not be considered verbatim unless otherwise noted:

I started by asking Firmhaber to elaborate on the payroll issue involving Justin Dudra. Firmhaber said the question marks on her documentation referenced discrepancies with hours worked. Firmhaber compared on/off duty times with the information provided to her by the Shelby County Sheriff's Office from a FOIA request.

Firmhaber advised the Shelby County Sheriff's Office went against their agreed upon contract by modifying their work schedule and hours to 4 days on and 4 days off, 10 hour work days. Firmhaber argued the employees were being paid for 80 hours bi-weekly, but the time worked was not consistent with the overall pay.

Firmhaber expressed concerns with not receiving all of the requested documents in a FOIA request. Firmhaber advised she was not provided with the overtime slips that would have verified the additional time worked by Shelby County Sheriff's Office employees. Trooper Schlouch reviewed the slips, specifically those of Deputy Dudra, in an attempt to verify the time worked.

Firmhaber discussed a problem she identified concerning overtime earned without working a complete 40

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Dumonceaux, Chad #5852

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hour week. Firnhaber stated the overtime calculations led to over payments and increased pension contributions.

Firnhaber documented time keeping issues with dispatchers going on and off duty. The times often ranged between 15-30 minutes. It should be noted, the CAD system utilized by the Shelby County Sheriff's Office was not intended to monitor time for payroll purposes.

Firnhaber stated when she took office in 2018, she asked all departments to utilize time sheets maintaining compliance with applicable laws. Not all departments were receptive to the changes proposed by Firnhaber, and some failed to comply with her requests.

Firnhaber was asked if she had attempted to make direct contact with the Sheriff's Office to obtain documentation and to resolve the time keeping issues. Firnhaber advised the request was made via FOIA.

In a December budget meeting, Firnhaber said she was basically told to sit down, shut up and mind your own business. Firnhaber disagreed with the approach, feeling responsible for dispersing tax payer money appropriately since she was signing off on the checks.

Firnhaber referenced the union contract stating if employees do not work or use benefit time before or after a holiday, they do not earn holiday pay. Firnhaber provided evidence of Bob Zakowski not being at work and not utilizing benefit time, from October 13-19, 2019. Firnhaber said if you work the holiday you get 12 hours of comp time, if you do not work it you get 8 hours. Firnhaber said Zakowski frequently puts 12 hours down on his time sheet when it is not warranted.

Trooper Schlouch asked Firnhaber if she believes, based off viewing the reports, that there is a criminal element to the complaint. Firnhaber said when she came into office in 2018 she tried to update the time keeping system. Firnhaber suggested to the Sheriff a more accurate time keeping system. The Sheriff said they have to swipe their badges to get in the building and that is sufficient.

In May (2019), Firnhaber requested a time sheet report. Firnhaber advised the time sheet indicated a courthouse employee was late for work 52 days, an average of 20 minutes. Firnhaber said she went to a board meeting and a board member yelled at her saying it was none of her business and she should just pay the money has told. Firnhaber said that particular door access was later discontinued by the Sheriff due to reported safety reasons.

Firnhaber was asked if there was an intentional misrepresentation of time worked by employees of the Sheriff's Office. Firnhaber advised she does not know what goes on at the Sheriff's Office. Firnhaber does not believe the Sheriff's Office is following their agreed upon contract. Firnhaber specifically pointed to employees prematurely earning vacation, sick and personal days, leading to over compensation. In terms of intentionally accepting overpayment, Firnhaber said employees should know if they are working 30 or 40 hours in a week.

Firnhaber did acknowledge the Sheriff's Office had recently begun implementing a new time keeping system. She also advised the 4 on 4 off schedule was discontinued.

I asked Firnhaber if there were any other issues she wanted to bring up at this time. Firnhaber did not. We concluded our interview at 11:35am.

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Immediately following the interview, Trooper Schlouch and I went to the Sheriff's Office to inquire about the time used by Bob Zakowski October 13-19. Secretary Tina Wade was unable to provide documentation of benefit time utilized, but did confirm with Bob Zakowski that he did not work during that time frame. Bob Zakowski advised he had utilized a week that had been granted to him for being in a supervisory role. See that attached memorandum for further details regarding the time earned.

On 08/05/2020 at approximately 2:30 p.m., the audio recording of the interview was copied to a CD-R. The CD-R was packaged and labeled as Exhibit #4. On 08/05/2020 at 3:45 p.m., Exhibit #4 was placed into temporary evidence locker #9, located at 2125 South First Street, Champaign, Illinois.

End of report.

Attachment:

- Supervisory time earned memo (1 page)

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