



## City of Crescent City

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December 4, 2020

H.D. "Gator" DeLoach III  
Putnam County Sheriff  
130 Orié Griffin Blvd.  
Palatka, Putnam County 32177

Dear Sheriff DeLoach,

As you know Crescent City is actively searching for a new Chief of Police. Pending the search, I have received reports of irregularities at the Crescent City Police Department (CCPD).

No current CCPD officer has the education, training and experience required to serve as the interim Chief. As the City Manager, I am leading the department in addition to fulfilling my day-to-day duties while conducting the search for a new Chief.

I have received a report of irregularities at CCPD and concerns with training and other records at CCPD.

In order to assure that CCPD is in compliance with all state certification laws, I have requested your guidance and assistance with these law enforcement matters.

In consultation with our attorneys, we have decided that it is in the best interest of all involved that we ask the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) to conduct an audit of CCPD records to assure me that our department is in compliance with all certification and training requirements. You have agreed to contact FDLE and request this audit on the City's behalf.

Pending this audit and an independent investigation of additional concerns that have been brought to my attention, you have agreed to provide our city with law enforcement services. Based on current law and acceptable law enforcement practices, you have agreed to provide these services using your personnel and resources. In the interim, Crescent City will place all CCPD personnel on administrative leave with pay until the audit and any independent investigation may be completed.

You have also agreed to coordinate with another independent law enforcement agency our request that the agency perform any necessary independent investigation(s).

We appreciate your cooperation and service to the citizens of Crescent City.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Michael Esposito'.

Michael Esposito  
City Manager

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**Michele Myers**  
Mayor

**H. Harry Banks**  
Vice-Mayor

**Judith B. West**  
Commissioner

**Lisa Kane DeVitto**  
Commissioner

**Cynthia Burton**  
Commissioner



## Putnam County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff H.D. "Gator" DeLoach

October 6, 2020

City Manager Michael Esposito  
3 Summit Street  
Crescent City, FL 32112

Ref: Assessment of Crescent City Police Department

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 an assessment was completed of the Crescent City Police Department at your request. The following observations were noted.

**Regarding the storage of evidence:** The evidence room is located in a pre-existing vault within the police department. In the vault is a room to the left secured with a two (2) key lock mechanism. Inside the room is a small refrigerator, a metal lock box which contains narcotic items and another identical lock box that contains firearms. There is also a small black safe which contained monies.

There were numerous boxes on shelves labeled with housing barcodes. In the boxes were assorted evidence labeled with barcodes stating the case numbers and tracking numbers. On the floor of the evidence room were two (2) cardboard boxes which also had assorted evidence. One of the boxes inventoried contained numerous items of narcotics, a handgun, money, along with sexual battery evidence and general storage items. There was an item of DNA evidence in the box that had been returned from the FDLE lab which was marked keep frozen, but was thawed. There were numerous items some of which had barcodes and some did not have barcodes on them. On the inventory list was an iPhone 6, Case number 17-12-310428, tracking number 937, assigned to this housing shelf 1C-9, but the phone was not in the housing. When records were checked it was determined the iPhone had been released to the owner previously, which had documentation. The housing was corrected. Corrections were also made for the money and firearm. Neither Miss Pheil nor Officer Burger had a great knowledge

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of computer evidence program (PMI), but did have enough knowledge to enter and release items.

**Regarding Officer Training:** A review of required training indicated all the officers had not completed the mandatory human trafficking training or the annual traser training which is required by Florida statute. Officer Robert Johnson had not completed mandatory firearms qualifications and at this time is not authorized to carry a firearm for law enforcement purposes. There is not a separate training file. There appears to be no standardized training program. The only certified instructor in the agency is Auxiliary Officer James Troiano.

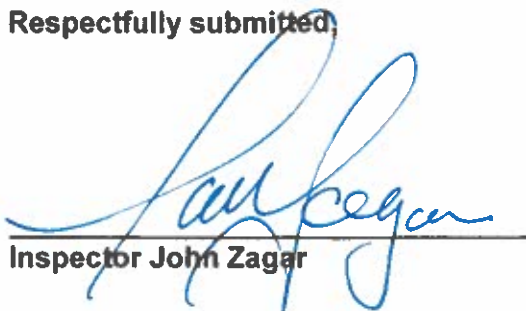
**Regarding records:** (Personnel, Medical, Training, Internal Affairs and Agency Reports). A review of records indicated there was no required destruction order log or copies of destruction order request. The records filed were not organized. HIPPA protected information was included in general files. Training documentation was mixed in different files. Internal Affairs were kept in a box and not put in files and were not in a locked cabinet. Required Internal Affairs logs were not maintained. Individuals who maintain record files have not received National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) training. A log is not maintained listing what equipment is issued and to whom.

**Regarding Grants Records Review:** Grant records appear to be in order. However, personnel assigned to apply for grants have not had appropriate training.

**Regarding Officer Issued Equipment:** A review of the officer issued equipment indicates the inventory reviewed appeared to be in good or fair condition. Some of the long guns had rust. There appears to be no control logs over equipment issuance and maintenance.

It should be noted Miss Phiel has been tasked with many responsibilities for which she has not received the appropriate training. However, Miss Phiel has done an excellent job with the small amount of training she has received. Miss Phiel seems open and eager to receive positive criticism and training.

Respectfully submitted,



Inspector John Zagar