

Missoula County Sheriff's Office



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
(March 21, 2018)

For more information contact:
Sheriff TJ McDermott
406-531-0301
tjmcdermott@missoulacounty.us

A Missoula County Sheriff's Deputy resigns amidst allegations of misconduct:

A deputy with the Missoula County Sheriff's Office resigned last month following an internal investigation into the deputy's conduct while on duty. In late 2017 and early 2018, Sheriff McDermott learned of two separate incidents where serious allegations of misconduct came to light against former deputy, John Leonard.

The first included inappropriate interaction with a coffee barista and the second involved having inappropriate contact with a cashier at a casino.

Sheriff McDermott temporarily suspended Leonard while an internal investigation was conducted by the Professional Standards Division of the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff McDermott later sent the results of the internal investigation to the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation for a third party review; who concluded Leonard's actions didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct, but, were very unprofessional and unethical.

After consulting with the County Attorney's Office and the Human Resource Department, Sheriff McDermott found it in the best interest of the Sheriff's Office and the community to accept the Leonard's resignation immediately.

Sheriff McDermott stated, "We are committed to providing our community with a Sheriff's Office that we can be proud of and trust. It is paramount that our deputies maintain the public trust that comes with their position and adhere to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics."

Lastly, we are saddened and disappointed but also grateful these events came to light so that it could be handled appropriately. We want to thank DCI for their assistance in this investigation.

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COPY



Missoula County Sheriff's Office
200 W. Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

J. MCDERMOTT
SHERIFF

Missoula County Sheriff's
Office

(406) 258-3303

(406) 531-0301

e-mail: tjmcdermott@missoulacounty.us

FAX: (406) 721-8575

Date: October 27, 2017

To: Corporal John Leonard

Ref: Suspension without pay

This letter is to inform you that you are suspended without pay, beginning at 0630 hours on November 2nd until 1830 hours on November 4th, 2017. You will return to work at 0630 hours on Wednesday, November 8, 2017.

This disciplinary action is a result of your off duty conduct, specifically your repeated and inappropriate interactions with an underage female employee of the Florence Coffee Shop, that resulted in a complaint being filed and investigated by the Sheriff's Office.

While you fully cooperated during the investigation, it revealed poor judgment and poor decision making on your part that resulted in behavior that reflects discredit on you and on the Sheriff's Office. This conduct is a violation of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and a violation of this department's policy on off-duty conduct.

In the future, you are directed not to engage in any activity that brings discredit to yourself or this office and are further directed to adhere to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, specifically "***I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or my agency.***" You must refrain from any contact with any individual involved in this complaint. Failure to follow my direction will result in additional disciplinary action that could include termination of your employment.

A copy of this letter will be placed in your personnel file. You may provide a written response to this notice within 30 days. You may also file a grievance in accordance with Article 34 of the Missoula County Deputy Sheriff's Association (MCDSA) collective bargaining agreement.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), a free and confidential counseling benefit offered by Missoula County, is available to you. A list of EAP providers is provided with this letter should that be of assistance to you for any reason to ensure there is no future misbehavior of this nature.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "TJ McDermott".

TJ McDermott

Signature:

Employee signature here indicates receipt and not necessarily agreement with this notice.

Date: 10-27-17



Missoula County Sheriff's Office
200 W. Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

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SHERIFF**

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COPY

Date: February 21, 2018

To: John Leonard

Re: Notice of Termination

This is to notify you that your employment with the Missoula County Sheriff's Office will be terminated, effective 5:00 PM Wednesday, February 21, 2018. This termination decision is based on your actions while on duty involving inappropriate conduct while at the Town Pump, Bonner MT on or about January 13, 2018.

I have carefully reviewed the investigation conducted by Captain Conway including a review of the video tape evidence of your interaction with the female clerk. Perhaps most disappointing to me, this incident occurred after you were previously disciplined for your interactions with a female clerk at another public establishment by engaging in inappropriate and unwanted attention resulting in a complaint to this office. You were counseled at that time on appropriate standards of behavior.

I have determined that your conduct has not demonstrated adherence to the standards of behavior of this office, or of a professional law enforcement officer vested with the public trust. Your actions in this incident have irreparably damaged the trust I must have in any officer under my command and also damaged the reputation of this office.

In fairness to all deputies in this department who strive for the highest standards in their conduct and service to the public, the only proper recourse for me is to terminate your employment and remove you from your position of deputy sheriff.

Please contact the Department of Human Resources to schedule a time to complete your termination-related paperwork. Please be advised that you have the right to file a grievance in accordance with the terms of your collective bargaining agreement.

Respectfully,

TJ McDermott
TJ McDermott
Sheriff

Your signature below indicates that you have received and read this Notice of Termination. It does not indicate that you agree with the contents.

Signature

Date

2.21.18

COPY

February 21st, 2018


To: Sheriff McDermott

From: John Leonard

Sheriff,

After meeting with you yesterday and reflecting on the situation with my family, I, John Leonard, would like to take you up on the offer to resign my position, if that option is still available to me. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I can no longer service in my position in a safe and effective manner.

Sincerely,



John Leonard

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T.J. MCDERMOTT
SHERIFF

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Office**

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Date: February 22, 2018

To: John Leonard

Re: Acceptance of resignation

Dear John,

I received your letter of resignation. After consulting with Human Resources and the County Attorney's Office, I agree to accept your resignation in lieu of terminating your employment, which will be reflected in your personnel file.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T.J. McDermott".

TJ McDermott
Sheriff

Cc Human Resource