

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 15, 2011

Village receives results of independent review of Police Department policies

The Village of Clarendon Hills recently received the results of an independent review of Police Department policies and procedures. The Village initiated the review after a former Clarendon Hills Police Officer was charged with the theft and sale of guns that had been in the custody of the Clarendon Hills Police Department.

The review concluded that the Clarendon Hills Police Department operates within standard police practices and procedures, and the alleged theft of guns by the former officer reflects misconduct of a single individual, was an isolated event, and was not indicative of any systemic problems within the Police Department.

The Village hired Charles Hervas of Hervas, Condon & Bersani, P.C., to conduct the review. Mr. Hervas is an attorney who practices in the area of municipal law and has substantial experience in police-related issues. The review included a series of interviews with individuals currently and previously employed by the Village and others with knowledge of the case. The review took place over approximately two months.

Mr. Ryan is alleged to have stolen guns that were in custody as part of a weapons turn-in program and were not involved in any criminal activity. The alleged thefts occurred between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007. Mr. Ryan is currently facing charges filed by the DuPage County State's Attorney's Office. The Village proceeded with Mr. Hervas's review to ensure current policies were adequate to prevent similar situations from occurring in the future. Mr. Hervas's report concluded that the Police Department's policies and procedures are in line with standard police operating procedures and are adequate to prevent a similar situation in the future.

Mr. Hervas's review found that prior to 2009, the documentation and organization of the Police Department's Evidence Room were not adequate. At that time, Mr. Ryan was one of the Police officers with greater access to the evidence area. During that period, items related to criminal matters were subject to inventory and documentation, however, non-criminal items were not subject to the same inventory procedures. In 2009, Mr. Ryan was removed from responsibility for the Evidence Room, and another officer was assigned to review the policies and procedures for evidence management. At that time, it was discovered that some guns received through the turn-in program were missing. The missing guns were reported to former Police Chief Patrick Anderson, who handled the investigation. According to the report, Chief Anderson was suspicious that Mr. Ryan was responsible for taking the weapons, but did not believe he could prove such an accusation so he did not pursue formal charges.

Mr. Hervas's report identified other incidents in which Mr. Ryan was the subject of disciplinary inquiries and alleged misconduct, including another incident involving the removal of items from the Evidence Room. The removal of evidence incident prompted then-Deputy Chief Ted Jenkins to remove Mr. Ryan from his Evidence Room responsibilities. After the 2009 audit and update of the evidence policies and procedures, no further incidents have occurred.

The report offered a number of recommendations to further ensure similar incidents can not happen in the future. They include: maintaining the current Evidence Room policies and procedures; conducting unannounced annual inspections of the Evidence Room in accordance with current policy; destroying any weapons currently in custody received as part of the turn-in program; maintaining better communication with the Village Manager on disciplinary matters; utilizing a formal Internal Investigation process for all major discipline incidents; and consulting the Village Attorney in police disciplinary matters that arise in the future.

Mr. Hervas concluded his report by stating he was impressed with the professionalism of the Police Department and the willingness of all parties to assist with the review.

Village President Tom Karaba said he is pleased to learn the results of the investigation process.

"Mr. Hervas's independent review confirmed our belief that the Clarendon Hills Police Department is staffed by professional, well-trained individuals who serve the best interests of the community," Karaba said. "We are glad to move forward from this event, and I want to thank those who participated in this process for their professionalism and cooperation."