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WILLOW SPRINGS MAYOR ANNOUNCES FINDINGS OF INVESTIGATION *Five police officers terminated or resign amid questions about improper acts*

An internal investigation into the activities of one disgraced former Willow Springs police officer has led to the resignations and terminations of nearly half of the police department in the last nine months, Mayor Alan Nowaczyk announced Wednesday.

Still ongoing is a village investigation into the use of public funds for private businesses, as well as the use of Cook County Sheriff's funds by an associate of those officers to conduct an investigation at their behest, including stakeouts of Mayor Nowaczyk that turned up nothing.

The internal investigation has so far resulted in:

- One officer terminated for lying under oath
- One officer terminated for falsifying police documents
- One officer retired at the start of his interrogation
- One officer resigning after receiving notice he'd be interrogated
- One officer resigning prior to the conclusion of his investigation
- Violations of the state gift ban act

The initial findings of the village investigation – and ensuing actions by some of those involved – are troubling to Nowaczyk, who vowed to continue the internal investigation, no matter where the truth leads. It's an effort, he said, to rid the department of practices and influences that plagued the village for far too long.

“It has been difficult – and painstakingly slow – to build solid cases, but the cost of inaction, of turning a blind eye to what's been done, is far greater,” Nowaczyk said. “People are suddenly resigning rather than answering questions under oath. Others have lied under oath. Still others have falsified official documents. Each of them have failed to fulfill their duty to our residents and to their profession. That won't be tolerated.”

The investigation began in 2013, when former Willow Springs Police Officer Michael Giorgetti was involved in a traffic accident in his squad car while conducting private business in Wisconsin. Giorgetti, it was discovered, was working for a former village contractor and –

together with former Public Works Director John DeHaan – went to retrieve equipment they planned to store in a village public works garage.

DeHaan retired from the department as the investigation was launched. Giorgetti was terminated and although he sued the village for wrongful termination, courts ruled against him, noting that he lied under oath, consistently changed his story and that the village had made “extra effort” to offer Giorgetti a fair hearing. Still, it was Giorgetti’s litigation – and the sworn statements given during the proceedings – that led to the much larger, ongoing investigation.

Giorgetti had received promotions under the administration of then-Police Chief John Carpino, who had been appointed to the job by then-Mayor Terry Carr. Carpino was also operating a private investigations business, Carpino-Hartigan, LLC, while he was police chief and several Willow Springs officers, including Giorgetti, are believed to have worked for that firm.

During civil litigation filed against the village by Giorgetti, the village subpoenaed payroll records and timesheets from that firm, to compare them with village records. Just days later, Giorgetti dropped that lawsuit. Still, the village investigation into time card fraud continues.

Also discovered during the internal investigation is that then-Chief Carpino hired his business partner, Luke Hartigan, as a Willow Springs police officer. Carpino and Hartigan both left their village positions before Mayor Nowaczyk took office. But Hartigan was later hired by the Cook County Sheriff, as part of a special unit to look into suburban corruption. In a sworn deposition, Hartigan admitted that in 2015, he carried out an investigation into Willow Springs officials at the request of Giorgetti. Hartigan admitted he conducted stake-outs of Mayor Nowaczyk and others. His work resulted in no evidence of wrong-doing and Hartigan resigned from his position with the Cook County Sheriff just days after giving his deposition. Still, village officials are pursuing leads relating to Hartigan’s work for the village and the sheriff.

All findings – once complete – will be forwarded to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

“What we’ve found so far has been disappointing,” Nowaczyk said. “But we are focused on hiring professionals who know our town and who are dedicated to keeping our residents safe.”

Nowaczyk said the village has continued to interview and hire new officers to replace those who were recently terminated, resigned or retired. Many of those new officers are coming through a newly developed Community Service Officer program. The program, started in 2013, identifies college graduates with public safety backgrounds and sponsors them for enrollment in the police academy. They work as community service officers in Willow Springs while completing their formal police academy training.

Since June, three new officers have been hired through that program.