

July 2, 2020

City of Sitka Assembly (assembly@cityofsitka.com)  
Sitka Police Department (robert.baty@sitkapd.org; jean.achee@sitkapd.org)  
State of Alaska (paul.miovas@alaska.gov; angie.kemp@alaska.gov)  
Sitka Tribe of Alaska (Council@sitkatriben-sn.gov)  
Alaska Police Standards Council (bob.griffiths@alaska.gov)

Re: Lack of Leadership at the City of Sitka/Sitka Police Department

This is a public letter to the citizens of Sitka, and the leadership of the above listed agencies/governments who may be affected.

Additionally, this letter will serve as an amendment to my letter of resignation to the State of Alaska, Department of Law, Criminal Division where I have been employed since 2018, most recently as a Victim/Witness Paralegal.

To maintain the integrity of this writing, I will withhold the names of those responsible for the actions I am about to detail. This is a deliberate attempt to forestall any accusations of vindictiveness and to build into the reaction a chance to be better and learn from mistakes. It is my hope that those officers and individuals who may recognize their actions here will be called to account by either their conscience or, failing that, their leadership. For any in supervisory positions who wish to follow up regarding the actions listed: I am open and available. The events listed will be itemized and individuals named. I will happily release these documents to you. They will not be released to the public.

Let it be said here that I love our justice system, believe in it, and support our law enforcement community. I was immensely proud to count myself among them. I recognize that with the writing of this letter, I may count myself in opposition. The depth of heartbreak this brings me cannot be overstated. It is in defense of this system and its integrity that I pen this letter.

I will begin by saying that I have anguished over the writing of this letter. It was my greatest honor to serve the communities of Sitka, Petersburg, Angoon, and Kake in every capacity in which I was able. The conversations I had with the citizens of each community will remain with me, though the honor of serving them ends with this letter. It is because I believe in our judicial system, our law enforcement, and the citizenry of these communities that I strive to bring into the light the deficiencies of our enforcement and prosecutorial endeavors.

The events listed happened throughout my employment with both the City and Borough of Sitka through my employment with the Sitka Police Department and later my employment with the State of Alaska, Department of Law, Criminal Division. This is not an exhaustive list and is strictly limited to situations I experienced personally. This is a continuous timeline, as my employment between the two overlapped and spanned from 2017 and ended effectively with notice of this letter to my employer.

Specific to my employment with the City of Sitka, I present the following account:

1. Enduring officer comments about not wishing to respond to calls for welfare, mental health, assistance from "drunk Natives" because "they're against [law enforcement] anyway" and "don't even want help."
2. Officers being very vocal about either wearing "for show" or not wearing Native totem themed pins on uniform because "they're racist against [white men]" and wearing one "doesn't help anyway."
3. Reticence to respond to possible assault calls because the caller was Native and there was an established and prevailing stance against response, since this was "accepted" and "normal" behavior, and "would just happen again anyway". This included jokes about 'just waiting for the next one [call]."
4. Routine reluctance by specific officers to respond to certain residences or situations that were known to involve Native individuals; up to and including assaults and suicide calls.
5. Extreme and repeated pressure from specific officers to access federal databases to run individuals and obtain information about them illegally. When the officer was refused on two occasions, I then was instructed to generate a false police report and "then just delete [the false report]." When I refused on grounds that I was uncomfortable, and my direct supervisor would need to be called to delete any cases generated without reason, I was told: "Never mind then. I'll get someone else to do it." My supervisor was notified. There was no response that I was made aware of. Additionally, I presented this information to my leadership under that State of Alaska, to an apathetic response on multiple occasions. This is both an ethical violation and a federal violation that I felt was deserving of a response.
6. I was reprimanded on two occasions that I recall for requesting the highest level of response for medical emergencies. One instance was a call of an overturned vehicle, with no information about whether the potential occupants inside were injured or dying on the 5700 block of Halibut Point Rd. I was reprimanded because this officer felt that it was a "waste of resources and effort." His perspective was that I should have waited for officer arrival on-scene to determine whether EMS was necessary; he was the highest point of command for the overnight shift on that occasion. I defied his advice to not dispatch EMS, and he told me that I was treading on the line of insubordination.
7. One officer who repeatedly dismissed tickets outside of established City and PD policy, if the properly ticketed individual was known to the officer. This happened on multiple occasions, and I was told there was no recourse. This policy was applied unevenly and appeared to be entirely dependent on whether the individual was a social contact of the officer.
8. A policy of trespassing from "all harbors" or "all Hames properties" which disproportionately effects the lower socio-economic population. Regarding officer perspective, comments regarding "them" or "it's the drunk Natives" not having anywhere to use hygienic facilities or shop for food were repeatedly met with apathy or callous disregard and vocalized hopes that "they'll move on and bother" some other community.

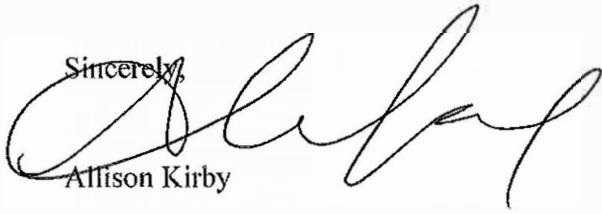
Specific to my employment with the State of Alaska, I present the following account:

1. Supervisor providing inconsistent and inadequate training to employees, with relative disregard for requests for further training. Additionally, continual instructions to disregard the training I received in formal settings, causing confusion and frustration among myself and co-workers as policies changed apparently at whim.
2. Supervisor's continued comments to me about confidential internal issues that I should not have been privy to i.e. comments about the performance of coworkers that should not have been addressed outside of that individual's knowledge, despite my comments indicating my discomfort.
3. Police Department officers' rush to judgment in charging cases that were not fully investigated. This is particularly troubling given that the referenced cases included charges regarding child molestation, sexual assault, abuse, and felony-level theft. Related, officers' reluctance and ultimate refusal to alter the charges after discussions with ADA's office, in one case an Assault II.
4. Reticence in follow up investigation or in doing the necessary work to provide full investigation i.e. reluctance to request necessary documents for the prosecution of a murder case or causing prosecutorial window to expire in high-level burglary resulting in dismissal of case. On one occasion, subjects were known to officers in a personal capacity.
5. Officer refusal to investigate a potential high-level fraudulent access device until the ADA's office told him whether it would be accepted for prosecution. The reasoning was that the officer did not want to do the work if it "wasn't going to be worth it."
6. Officer told a suspect in an ongoing drug investigation that they were the subject of an investigation, effectively ending the investigation and any possible prosecution.
7. Non-responsiveness of both the current Police Dept. Chief and command who were hired on what could be characterized as a platform of change, while essentially ignoring all community partners -DJJ, SART, MDT, APO. Additionally, I received several reports from citizens who called our office (DAO/ADA) because they were unable to reach the leadership at the PD.

This letter is not a top-to-bottom condemnation of all practices and persons who work within our law enforcement and prosecutorial systems. This is a plea to recognize our shortcomings in vital areas. In working as a part of these departments, it is a daily practice to strive to offer the best we have available while crashing against our humanity, public opinion, and departmental failings. Failures happen, standards lag - but to witness and accept them without comment is to fail the communities we vow to represent. I have seen this process first-hand and the question for me has become not whether I need to speak, but in what manner and at what delay. Having failed to generate change from within, I offer my resignation on the altar of change. This may not affect all of the change I wish for my community but let no one say that I didn't live the principles I professed; let no one say I remained silent as justice was miscarried.

I add my voice to those who cry for unbiased representation and law enforcement they might trust in and rely on. I add my voice to those who cry for a city that will hear them, who seek justice, and a willingness to root out the corruption and darkness at whatever cost to their own aims.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allison Kirby', written over the typed name.

Allison Kirby

Former Sitka Police Department Dispatcher; Victim/Witness Paralegal for the State of Alaska

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Cc: Media sources