

IN THE EXECUTIVE ETHICS COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

IN RE: TAHNEE WOOD                    )        OEIG Case #15-00855

OEIG FINAL REPORT (REDACTED)

Below is an amended final summary report from an Executive Inspector General. The General Assembly has directed the Executive Ethics Commission (Commission) to redact information from this report that may reveal the identity of witnesses, complainants or informants and “any other information it believes should not be made public.” 5 ILCS 430/20-52(b).

The Commission exercises this responsibility with great caution and with the goal of balancing the sometimes-competing interests of increasing transparency and operating with fairness to the accused. In order to balance these interests, the Commission may redact certain information contained in this report. The redactions are made with the understanding that the subject or subjects of the investigation have had no opportunity to rebut the report’s factual allegations or legal conclusions before the Commission.

The Commission received this amended final report from the Governor’s Office of Executive Inspector General (“OEIG”) and a response from the agency in this matter. The Commission, pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52, redacted the final report and mailed copies of the redacted version and responses to the Attorney General, the Governor’s Executive Inspector General and to Tahnee Wood at her last known addresses.

The Commission reviewed all suggestions received and makes this document available pursuant to 5 ILCS 430/20-52.

**I. INTRODUCTION**

On May 6, 2015, the Office of Executive Inspector General (OEIG) received a complaint from an anonymous complainant alleging that Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) Shapiro Developmental Center (Shapiro Center) Office Associate Tahnee Wood engaged in inappropriate conduct at the workplace. The primary complaint was that Ms. Wood took inappropriate images of herself at the workplace. The complaint was accompanied with images alleged to have been taken by Ms. Wood at work, some of which were of an explicit nature. The complaint also alleged that Ms. Wood engaged in other misconduct, such as awarding overtime to DHS employees for time they did not work and [unfounded allegation of wrongdoing redacted].

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### **A. Ms. Tahnee Wood's Position At The DHS Shapiro Developmental Center**

Shapiro Center is a residential and training center for DHS clients with intellectual disabilities. The Shapiro Center campus has 32 residential facilities and other buildings, including the Administration Building, a Transportation Building, and the Central Dietary Building that is also referred to as "the kitchen."

Ms. Wood is an Office Associate in Shapiro Center's Transportation Division. Her office is located in the Transportation Building. In her role, she oversees the daily operation of the Transportation Division, including scheduling drivers and vehicles for needs both on and off campus, preparing daily timesheets for Transportation Division drivers, assigning overtime to drivers, and coordinating vehicle maintenance. She also works overtime in other departments, assisting with inventory or kitchen duties.

### **B. Relevant DHS And Shapiro Center Policies**

DHS and the Shapiro Center impose various policies governing the conduct of its employees. DHS employees receive a copy of the DHS Employee Handbook containing policies and procedures governing DHS employees. In addition to the DHS Employee Handbook, Shapiro Center issues its employees "Shapiro Policy 6/1," which states that employees shall abide by DHS policies and regulations, and which also sets forth Shapiro Center policies and procedures relevant to its own employees.<sup>1</sup>

Both DHS and Shapiro Center have a strict cellular phone use policy. The DHS Employee Handbook prohibits the use of personal cellular phones at DHS work sites without prior supervisory approval.<sup>2</sup> The Shapiro Center's policy contains a similar prohibition on personal cellular phone use. It states:

Personal electronic devices (including cell phones) are not allowed to be used while on duty and are to be kept in their locked vehicle. Employees may only use personal electronic devices while on approved breaks in their personal vehicle.<sup>3</sup>

The DHS Employee Handbook states that DHS employees are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible, professional manner, and that DHS employees "shall not demonstrate inappropriate behavior or discourteous treatment of the public, co-workers, customers, or applicants."<sup>4</sup> In addition, Shapiro Policy 6/1 sets forth a "Conduct Unbecoming a State Employee" policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Shapiro, Standard Operating Policy & Procedure, No. 6/1 (July 2011) ("Shapiro Policy 6/1").

<sup>2</sup> DHS Employee Handbook, Section V. Employee Personal Conduct, at V-11 (April 1, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Shapiro Policy 6/1 at 6/1/5.

<sup>4</sup> DHS Employee Handbook, Section V. Employee Personal Conduct, at V-1 – V-2.

### III. INVESTIGATION

#### A. The OEIG's Analysis Of Images Submitted By The Complainant

The anonymous complainant submitted 20 different images with the complaint, many of which depicted a woman exposing various parts of her body. Although the attachment to the complaint contained 22 Exhibits labeled 1-22, two of the Exhibits (Exhibit 9 and Exhibit 10) appear to be duplicate images of 19 and 8, respectively. Specifically the images contain the following:

- Exhibit 1-4: head shots of Ms. Wood;
- Exhibit 5: a woman exposing her [REDACTED];
- Exhibit 6-10 and 15-22: a woman's [REDACTED]; and
- Exhibit 11-14: a woman's [REDACTED].

Although it was alleged that the images were of Ms. Wood, images 5-22 do not include the face of the individual in the image. In an effort to verify whether the images were taken at the Shapiro Center, OEIG investigators went to the Shapiro Center to view Ms. Wood's office, the kitchen, and Transportation Building. OEIG investigators photographed areas in these locations.

OEIG investigators analyzed Exhibits 1-22 submitted by the complainant and compared those to their observations and pictures they took at the Shapiro Center. Those observations are described below:

<b>Images</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Complaint Exhibits 1 – 4	The background in these images match the background of Ms. Wood's office. Some identifying items include, but are not limited to: artwork, family photographs, and an air conditioning unit.
Complaint Exhibits 7, 8, and 10	The background in these images match the background of Ms. Wood's office. Some identifying items include, but are not limited to: a space heater, walkie-talkie, and Ms. Wood's desk.
Complaint Exhibits 9 and 19	There is a small section of wall tile in the background that is consistent with the wall tile observed by OEIG investigators at the Shapiro kitchen.

Although the remaining images appear to be taken of the same person, OEIG investigators were unable to determine the location of origin for the remaining images.

#### B. Interview Of DHS Office Associate Tahnee Wood

On September 1, 2015, the OEIG interviewed Ms. Wood to discuss the allegations and to confirm whether any of the images submitted with the complaint were taken of/by Ms. Wood

with her personal cellular phone in violation of DHS and Shapiro Center cellular phone use policy.

### **1. Ms. Wood's Cellular Phone Use**

OEIG investigators presented Ms. Wood with the DHS Employee Handbook and the Shapiro Center policy prohibiting the use of cellular phones at DHS work sites. Although Ms. Wood stated that she had never been presented with the DHS Employee Handbook and had never seen it, she did acknowledge that cellular phone use at a DHS work site is "totally illegal" because Shapiro Center policy requires employees to leave their cellular phones in their vehicles. She stated that employees are expected to use cellular phones in their cars on break. Ms. Wood, however, admitted that she violated the cellular phone policy because she keeps a personal cellular phone in her desk or purse while at work.

According to Ms. Wood, she needs to keep her cellular phone in her office because there has been at least one occasion in which the Shapiro Center switchboard operator did not transfer an urgent telephone call from her daughter's daycare. Ms. Wood also stated that the cellular phone policy was selectively enforced at Shapiro Center.

### **2. Images Submitted with Complaint**

Ms. Wood was presented with and reviewed 20 images (Exhibits 1-8 and 11-22)<sup>5</sup> that were submitted with the complaint. Ms. Wood admitted that all of the images were of her, but stated that only some of them were taken while at work. Ms. Wood identified Exhibits 1 – 4, 7, 8, 19, and 20 as having been taken at the Shapiro Center but denied that the remaining images were taken at work. She stated that the images that she took at work were taken during her break time, but acknowledged that using her cellular phone at the Shapiro Center was a policy violation. She also admitted to posting images 1-4 on social media websites, but did not recall if she posted the images during working hours or while at the Shapiro Center.

Ms. Wood also stated that some of the images were over two years old, as evidenced by various features, including the layout of her office space and the fact that the images did not depict a body piercing. The only images that she recognized as having been taken within the last year were Exhibits 2 and 4.

Ms. Wood stated that aside from Exhibits 1 – 4, the images presented to her were private images that were stored on an old cellular phone that her ex-boyfriend, with whom she is in a custody battle, had stolen from her.

### **3. Ms. Wood's Assignment of Overtime to Transportation Drivers**

Ms. Wood described her manner of scheduling overtime to Transportation Division employees. She said that the drivers belong to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters union and as such, she must follow specific requirements when assigning overtime. Ms. Wood stated

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<sup>5</sup> Ms. Wood was not shown Exhibits 9 and 10 because they were duplicates of 19 and 8, respectively.

that she uses a “time offered” and “time taken” formula to balance the manner in which overtime is offered to the drivers. She stated that if the drivers are “balanced,” then the overtime is offered in order of seniority. She denied ever offering overtime to drivers based on the quality of their work or personal friendships. Ms. Wood stated that overtime is “all a number game” and that one of the more senior drivers double checks her overtime calculations frequently, in order to ensure it is done fairly. Ms. Wood stated that she has never approved overtime pay for a driver that did not work the overtime hours.

#### **4. Discussion of Other Allegations**

Investigators addressed with Ms. Wood allegations [unfounded allegations in two sentences redacted].

##### **C. Interview Of DHS Employee [Employee 1]**

The OEIG interviewed DHS employee [Employee 1] who stated that he has been a driver for the Shapiro Center for the past 22 years. According to [Employee 1], he is the most senior driver at Shapiro and he reviews the drivers’ overtime assignments once or twice a week. [Employee 1] stated that overtime is offered to drivers according to the rules established in the collective bargaining agreement, and based on his review, he is certain that the overtime is distributed fairly. [Employee 1] also stated that he was unaware of anyone being given extra overtime pay for time not worked.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS**

##### **A. DHS Office Associate Tahnee Wood Violated The DHS And Shapiro Center Cellular Phone Use Policies**

Both DHS and the Shapiro Center contain clear policies prohibiting employees from using cellular phones in the work place.<sup>6</sup> Ms. Wood was aware of the prohibition and stated that personal cellular phone use was “totally illegal,” adding that it was restricted to an employee’s vehicle. Nonetheless, Ms. Wood admitted that she kept her cellular phone in her desk drawer or her purse in the office, and admitted to using her cellular phone to take eight images, some of which are inappropriate in nature, in the work place. Thus, the allegation that Ms. Wood violated DHS and Shapiro Center policies regarding cellular phone use in the work place is **FOUNDED**.<sup>7</sup>

##### **B. DHS Office Associate Tahnee Wood Engaged In Conduct Unbecoming of a DHS Employee**

Ms. Wood’s conduct in taking personal images in the work place also violates DHS and Shapiro Center general policies regarding an employee’s conduct. The OEIG finds that taking

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<sup>6</sup> DHS Employee Handbook, Section V. Employee Personal Conduct, at V-11; Shapiro Policy 6/1 at 6/1/5.

<sup>7</sup> The OEIG concludes that an allegation is “founded” when it has determined that there is reasonable cause to believe that a violation of law or policy has occurred, or that there has been fraud, waste, mismanagement, misconduct, nonfeasance, misfeasance, or malfeasance.

images of a personal or explicit nature in the work place is conduct unbecoming and does not belong in the work place. Specifically, Ms. Wood admitted that Exhibits 7, 8, 19, and 20 were taken in the work place. These are images of Ms. Wood exposing inappropriate body parts. Therefore, the allegation that Ms. Wood violated DHS' and Shapiro Center's personal conduct policies is **FOUNDED**.

**C. Additional Allegations Regarding DHS Office Associate Tahnee Wood's Conduct**

The OEIG reviewed the allegation regarding Ms. Wood's improper awarding of overtime to Transportation Division employees. Ms. Wood described the procedure she follows in awarding overtime and stated that she must follow specific rules as a result of the Teamsters collective bargaining agreement, which covers the Transportation Division drivers. In addition, Ms. Wood stated that one of the drivers frequently reviews her calculations to confirm that she is properly and fairly offering and assigning overtime to the drivers. The OEIG interviewed [Employee 1] who reviews the overtime assignments and confirmed that this was being done properly. There is insufficient information to conclude that Ms. Wood improperly awarded overtime; therefore, this allegation is **UNFOUNDED**.

The OEIG inquired about [unfounded allegations in three sentences redacted], the allegation is **UNFOUNDED**.

**V. CONCLUSION**

The OEIG issues the following findings and recommendations:

- **FOUNDED** – Tahnee Wood violated the DHS and Shapiro Center cellular phone use policies by using her personal cellular phone in the work place.
- **FOUNDED** – Tahnee Wood violated the DHS and Shapiro Center personal conduct policies by taking photos of a personal or explicit nature in the work place.
- **UNFOUNDED** – Tahnee Wood did not violate DHS and Shapiro Center policies by providing overtime to Transportation Division drivers.
- **UNFOUNDED** – [Unfounded allegations redacted.]

The OEIG recommends that DHS take whatever action it deems appropriate regarding Ms. Wood's violation of DHS and Shapiro Center cellular phone use and general employee conduct policies. The OEIG also recommends that Ms. Wood be provided a copy of the DHS Employee Handbook and be required to sign another certification form regarding her understanding of its contents and her need to abide by DHS policies.

No further investigative action is needed and this case is considered closed.

Date: October 14, 2015

**Office of Executive Inspector General for  
the Agencies of the Illinois Governor**  
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**Susan Haling #162**  
Deputy Inspector General and  
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Investigator



Bruce Rauner, Governor

James T. Dimas, Secretary-designate

November 2, 2015

*Via e-mail to Fallon Opperman, Deputy Inspector General and Chief of Chicago Division,  
on behalf of:*

Maggie Hickey

Executive Inspector General

Office of the Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor

69 West Washington Street, Suite 3400

Chicago, Illinois 60602

RE: Response to the Final Report for Complaint 15-00855

Dear Executive Inspector General Hickey:

This letter responds to the Final Report for Complaint Number 15-00855, attached. The Report essentially details founded allegations regarding taking personal or explicit photographs in the workplace by Department of Human Services (DHS) employee Tahnee Wood. The Report made three recommendations, namely that DHS issue appropriate discipline, that DHS give Ms. Wood another copy of the Employee Handbook, and that DHS require Ms. Wood to sign another certificate acknowledging its receipt and understanding of its contents.

These recommendations are being implemented. While a pre-disciplinary meeting was scheduled for the week of October 26, 2015, the meeting had to be rescheduled for the week of November 2, 2015. At this meeting, DHS will seek a 20 day suspension. In addition, a copy of the handbook was given to her, and she has signed another acknowledgement form.

As you know, the Collective Bargaining Agreement specifies a process for discipline, including a pre-disciplinary meeting to discuss the charges and their basis, a rebuttal period, and possibly several review periods before a final determination of the level of discipline is made and any final action can be taken. The process could take some time for resolution. For that reason, DHS will update your office as the process moves along. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robert J. Grindle, DHS' Ethics Officer.

Regards,

James T. Dimas  
Secretary-designate



Bruce Rauner, Governor

James T. Dimas, Secretary

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May 12, 2016

*Via e-mail to Fallon Opperman, Deputy Inspector General and Chief of Chicago Division,  
on behalf of:*

Maggie Hickey

Executive Inspector General

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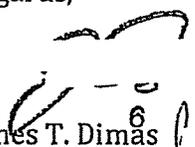
RE: Response to the Final Report for Complaint 15-00855

Dear Executive Inspector General Hickey:

This letter provides an update to the response for the Final Report for Complaint Number 15-00855. Among the Report's recommendations was a recommendation for discipline for Tahnee Wood. Ms. Wood has served a 20 day suspension. This disciplinary action has completed.

As such, the Department now considers this matter closed with respect to your office. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Robert J. Grindle, DHS' Ethics Officer.

Regards,

  
James T. Dimas  
Secretary