

PRIDE – PURPOSE – PROFESSIONALISM

Leaders must lead by example!

By Kat Rowoldt

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We are all so ready for this race for Chief of Police to be over. From what I hear through the grapevine, as they say, this one race has caused much division in the police department, as well as in our community. It just shouldn't be that way. For my husband and me, when we first heard who all was running, we were excited that two good men we personally knew were running for that position. We would never have dreamed what was to follow in the coming days.

Through countless calls, texts, lunches, etc. over the last couple of months, I have been made aware of the frustration so many people have with how things are historically handled in San Angelo. The ire at this situation being voiced by the citizens, and some city employees, is to the point they are about to scream and demand things change immediately. The other group appears to be the participants in the Good Ole Boy club. They are trying to circle the wagons so no one can intrude and cause change. It's a real one-eighty between the two encampments!

After my initial interviews with the three candidates that were running, John (my husband) and I knew who we were now going to vote for – we agreed – finally. BUT – it was from those interviews I became very concerned for our men and women who wear the blue and put their lives on the line to protect us. If what Lt. Mike Hernandez had reported, eleven attempts on his life had occurred while serving our community was true, then our citizens need to know how dangerous our city has become.

I have now made three attempts to retrieve information on these incidents to better understand how they happened, what capacity he was serving in when they happened, and IF the shooters had been apprehended and charged appropriately. My first attempt to retrieve

info was immediately sent to legal and came back stating they had no information that aligned with what I was asking – after running out the ten business day clock. My second attempt included wording someone suggested I use, and it too failed after sitting in legal for the maximum 10 business days once again.

I submitted a third request using actual codes which related to the type of incidents that would have been used in writing the reports, given to me by an officer in Texas, and this time it did not go to legal. It looked promising. I was hoping to validate Lt. Mike Hernandez's claim and finally write an article about the rise in violence in our city. After sitting on it for a full 10 business days and pushing now into early voting, it was returned to me once again stating they could not find any incidents.

✓ On 6/3/2024 9:27:05 AM, San Angelo Public Information Requests wrote:

Subject: [Records Center] Police Department PIR :: P006990-052024

Body:



San Angelo Police Department
401 E Beauregard Ave
San Angelo, TX 76903
Tel: (325)-657-4246

June 03, 2024

RE: PD PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST of May 20, 2024., Reference # P006990-052024.

Dear Kat Rowoldt,

The San Angelo Police Department received a public records request from you on May 20, 2024. Your request mentioned: **"I am requesting information on "attempted capital murder," "aggravated assault against a public servant" or "aggravated assault with a deadly weapon" against Officer Mike Hernandez at whatever rank he held at the time, who would be the potential "victim" in the last 33 years. Any records prior to 1999, I understand it may need to be a paper copy.**

CJIS codes:

13150011 AGG ASSAULT AGAINST PUB SERVANT

09990020 CAPITAL MURDER OF A PEACE OFFICER OR FIREMAN (attempted)

13150005 AGG ASSLT W/DEADLY WEAPON

I would like to know the date of the incident, the capacity he was functioning in (SWAT, patrol, etc), type of call it was, and if the shooter was apprehended and charges filed."

God morning,

Unfortunate after extensive research we were unable to locate any records involving Lt. Mike Hernandez that fir the description that you outlined labelling him as a victim involving CJIS codes 13150011 Agg Assault Against Pub Servant, 09990020 Capital Murder of a Peace Officer or Fireman (attempted), or 13150005 Agg Assalt w/Deadly Weapon.

The San Angelo City Council adopted a policy at their December 13, 2022 meeting to enact Section 552.275 of the Texas Government Code,

After using 36-hours of staff time in a fiscal year (Oct. 1 – Sept. 30), you will be charged at a rate of \$15/hour for future requests. No work will be done until payment is received.

The total number of hours worked on this request was: **0.00**

The total number of hours worked on all requests submitted by you since October 1 is: **2.37**

Based on three PIA requested attempts, plus Lt. Hernandez's lack of interest in validating when I have reached out to him directly, it appears that **ZERO** incidents actually occurred based on what SAPD can find in their records. While I truly believe and have had reported to me at least one incident did occur, it seems no records were made of it happening.

So, why did Lt. Hernandez say in a forum, then later confirm in an interview with me, that so many incidents occurred? If he can't be truthful in an informal atmosphere, how will he handle the daily stress or God-forbid a crisis situation under pressure?

Lt. Mike Hernandez has chosen three words to describe his platform: PRIDE, PURPOSE, AND PROFESSIONALISM. It states on his website for Chief of Police that *Pride in the department means answering the call to serve your community. It's protecting citizens and fellow police officers from those who wish to do them harm.* His opening point fits so beautifully with what I was trying to do in gathering information to inform the public, yet he has chosen repeatedly not to respond to the questions about the eleven incidents – so how do you protect people and officers when you cannot be forthright in addressing questions about things you yourself have reported as having happened?

His second word was PURPOSE, stating: *Purpose in our community begins with building strong relationships between law enforcement and the city of San Angelo. This is essential to improving public safety.* I have to ask; how can you build strong relationships when you are not available to bring clarity to statements you have made? ...when you will not reply back to calls or texts? ...when you avoid the media? Added note: I think it is interesting that it states between law enforcement and the city of San Angelo. The city of San Angelo is a government body – it's not the "citizens" of San Angelo.

Thirdly, PROFESSIONALISM which states: *Professionalism within the department comes from better training and improved discipline. Recruitment and retention of police officers with integrity ensures increased productivity and a better experience for the citizens of San Angelo.* I find this one interesting when he talks about discipline and integrity.

In one of the previous articles, I presented the PIA request I had submitted about candidates using their assigned vehicles to attend fundraising/campaign events for themselves. Out of three candidates, only one of them got hits - Lt. Hernandez. He has been spotted several times (my list was not extensive, and it's happened since the dates I submitted) using his work vehicle (paid for by taxpayers) to go to fundraising events for himself. That is against department policy. How do you discipline that? Where's the integrity too?

I also shared several pictures he has posted on his own Facebook page for his candidacy showing him wearing his uniform with badge and gun. Lt. Hernandez's uniform is not standard police uniform, but a more casual dress (slacks, shirt) with badge and gun. While you could say he was on duty and this was during lunch (this is still against policy and the other candidates changed their attire), the photos of the events he posted were after hours. This is a major disrespect for rules and policy by not only doing it, but then posting it for all the other officers and public to see.

How will he run a department when he is not willing to follow the rules that give it the structure in which to work? As I mentioned earlier, citizens are so frustrated with this kind of leadership. **Rules for thee, but not for me.** We see it locally, at the state level, and don't get me started on the national level. It all starts at the local level though. We must ensure we do things right on the local level so it can begin to impact the county, state, and national levels too.

I put in a call to the Attorney General's office a couple of weeks ago regarding the SAPD splitting hairs to not respond to my requests. I guess I will be calling them back and letting them know the status of my third request now. As I have said before, someone is not telling the truth; Lt. Mike Hernandez, or the administrators in charge of SAPD records department. Someone has a reason to hide information, or maybe both do.

I have spoken with numerous officers over the last couple of months regarding them being shot at by the bad guys. Every one of them have reported that it is still so rare to be shot at even once or twice. They all felt an officer in a town of our size would be hard-pressed to be

shot at more than two or three times in a lifetime of work. One retired officer I was just with for a few days at a training event, used to work in Oakland, CA and was shot years ago in the head. Thankfully, he survived. It does happen. The question remains, how much is it happening in San Angelo, Texas?

Most of us are so fed up with things we have thrown our arms up and said, 'to hell with it!' Today, we can see that is exactly what has happened because we stopped being involved and standing up for what is right. It has gone to hell in many ways because we did not stop wrong things in the early stages and allowed them to slowly remove our rights we have as citizens.

But...if we don't get involved, stop repeating the stupid actions that have put us in this situation to start with, stop allowing right actions and moral decisions to be chipped away and depleted, we are no longer going to have our wonderful community, the incredible state we call Texas, and the nation the world has always dreamed of being like or coming to live. We have lost so much ground just in my lifetime.

Leaders must lead by example. How they handle small and simple situations will be greatly amplified under pressure. It has truly been seen in this local race. Hernandez has avoided answering questions in regard to the eleven situations where he reports he was shot at by bad guys. Sgt. Travis Griffith when questioned regarding campaign signs immediately sought out legal opinions to make sure his actions were aligned with the law and then took it to his accuser. Once again, when Griffith was called out about his wife's email to co-workers, he immediately called a press conference and openly addressed the situation even though it was painful, awkward, and uncomfortable.

Leaders must lead by example.

Citizens must vote for the best leader and stop voting for friends, their son's soccer coach, or fellow church member. Look at the person, the position, and vote responsibly.

One more thing - it's time for us as citizens to question why current leadership in the SAPD and also City Council, has not called out and

brought attention to this situation when someone is not following “policy” in how they conduct themselves as an employee of the City of San Angelo. It’s getting pretty full under that very lumpy carpet. Maybe it’s time citizens stop allowing things to be swept under the carpet. Out of sight – out of mind!

Go vote responsibly.

This was article seven in the series. To see the full list of articles, go to ChristianReporterNews.com.