

Pima County Sheriff's Department
MEDIA RELEASE

Mark D. Napier, Sheriff

Sheriff Napier Responds to Law Enforcement Merit System Council

February 4, 2020

There have been some comments in the media regarding a recent Law Enforcement Merit System Council (LEMSC) hearing that I feel compelled to address. As your Sheriff, I always strive to be measured and thoughtful in the way that I respond to issues and controversy. The allegations aired in the media by some members of the LEMSC require a response.

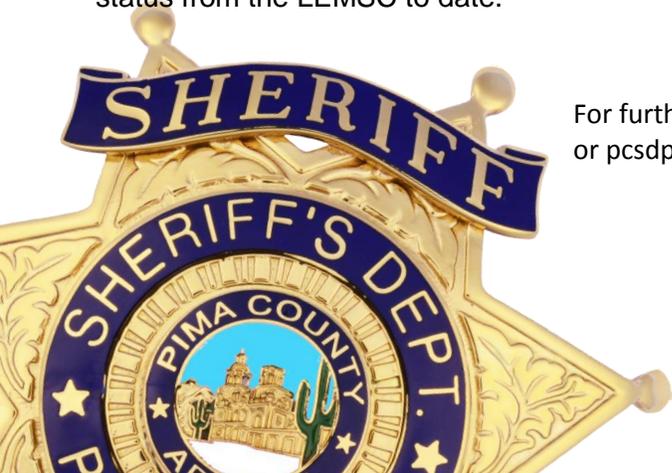
There is an allegation that two of my Chiefs and I provided false testimony to the LEMSC. This would constitute perjury, which is a very serious issue. This hurtful and meritless allegation is simply not supported by objective facts. No one should be accused of perjury based on a subjective supposition of facts or a whimsical desire to believe one thing over another. There must be some basis in objective facts for such an allegation to have merit. I am confident that careful review of the facts and of the hearing transcripts will convincingly demonstrate that perjury did not occur.

On January 17, 2020, I formally requested that the Pima County Attorney's Office conduct an investigation into the allegation of perjury. This is not because I believe wrongdoing occurred. Rather, it is to restore the public's trust by having an outside and independent review of the matter. I will not make further comments on this, as doing so when the matter is under investigation would be inappropriate. When the review has been completed and the results made public, I will comment further.

There is an allegation that Chief Woolridge ignored a subpoena regarding this hearing. Further, that I was complicit in allowing him to do so. This is a troubling allegation. Chief Woolridge appeared at the date/time of the original subpoena and was prepared to testify. The LEMSC decided not to accept his testimony at that time, which is their prerogative. Prior to his rescheduled appearance, he presented incontrovertible medical documentation stating that he had to be put on immediate administrative medical leave for a serious medical condition. Out of respect for his privacy on such a deeply personal matter, we disclosed that he had, at no choice of his, to be on administrative leave. I believe the LEMSC reasonably knew the reason for his leave status and yet chose to frame it differently to the media. I have received no request for documentation supporting his leave status from the LEMSC to date.

For further information contact the Public Information Office at (520) 237-3740
or pcsdpio@sheriff.pima.gov.

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It seems that prior to making statements to the media a request for such documentation would have occurred. Chief Woolridge was not dodging a subpoena; he is fighting for his life. I am deeply saddened by this spurious allegation.

The Sheriff's Department does not target employees for disparate disciplinary treatment. When inappropriate conduct and policy violations occur, we investigate them and act upon them. The public rightly expects us to hold our personnel to high standards of conduct, as so doing ensures the public trust. The highest standards should be applied to our command staff. Command staff is entrusted with greater responsibility, are highly compensated and serve as role models for our line-level staff. We do not target; we hold accountable. Law enforcement derives its authority from the public trust. Maintenance of it is critical and we take it seriously. We look forward to a more positive relationship with the LEMSC and their partnership in helping the Sheriff's Department ensure professional standards are upheld and the public's trust is held dear.

I will not comment on this matter further at this time.

Thank you,

Sheriff Mark D. Napier



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