



### **Report of Incident**

TO: George Recktenwald, Director  
Department of Public Protection

FROM: David Vanis, Captain  
Public Protection Administration  
Internal Affairs

DATE: November 18, 2014

SUBJECT: IA2014-327, Laura Chorost, Lieutenant, Fire Services

#### **Witnesses:**

Michael Gallimore, EMT, VCEMS  
Nicholas Reagan, Citizen  
Cydney Reagan, Citizen  
Ryan Remillard, Firefighter, VCFS

#### **References:**

1. Memo from Capt Vanis to Dir Recktenwald titled "Anonymous complaint received by Personnel Division on September 23, 2014" (Dated September 26, 2014).
2. Memo ordering Internal Investigation (Dated September 30, 2014).
3. CAD information.
4. GPS information.
5. Mr. Nicholas Reagan witness interview transcript (Dated September 30, 2014).
6. Mrs. Cydney Reagan witness interview transcript (Dated September 30, 2014).
7. EMT Michael Gallimore witness interview transcript (Dated October 1, 2014).
8. Firefighter Ryan Remillard witness interview transcript (Dated October 3, 2014).
9. Lieutenant Laura Chorost subject interview transcript (Dated October 24, 2014).

**Complaint:**

On September 23, 2014, Ginger Hadley, Senior Staff Assistant in the Personnel Division received a phone call alleging employee misconduct within the Fire Services Division. The caller would not identify herself but the caller-id indicated that the call was placed from (386)492-3781. The caller alleged that Fire Lieutenant Laura Chorost and Firefighter Ryan Remillard were involved in a romantic relationship both in and out of the workplace. The caller specified on April 18, 2014 EVAC ambulance 232, staffed by Paramedics Victoria Ramirez and Danielle Landry, was dispatched to medical call #F141080187 in Orange City along with a VCFS Rescue Unit staffed by Lt. Chorost and FF Remillard. After the call was cancelled, all four returned to Fire Station 32. While at Station 32, Lt. Chorost and FF Remillard were found in bed together by PMs Landry and Ramirez. The caller was not sure if they were involved in intercourse but stated they were "very heated." The caller further alleged that Lt. Chorost was currently being investigated by DCF for two false child abuse claims and has either been charged, or in the process of being charged, with felony battery by Ormond Beach Police. Ms. Hadley wrote a synopsis of the conversation and provided this to Fire Services Director Jeff Smith and Public Protection Director George Recktenwald.

Director Recktenwald directed me to conduct an inquiry to verify the allegations made by the anonymous caller.

An RMS search indicated that OBPD had filed a complaint affidavit on the behalf of Cydney Reagan requesting the charge of Simple Battery [FSS 784.03(1)(a)1], a misdemeanor. The date of this incident was September 16, 2014. This, and other reports submitted by OBPD, indicated that Cydney Reagan's husband, Nicholas Reagan, shares custody of a young child with Lt. Chorost. Lt. Chorost had made two reports of child abuse to OBPD against Mr. and Mrs. Reagan. Both reports were determined to be unfounded by OBPD investigators and DCF. It should be noted that Lt. Chorost had notified her superior, Fire Service Director Jeff Smith, of the pending battery charge shortly after the incident. At the time of this report, the CJIS database has no information in regards to the pending Battery charge against Lt. Chorost.

The ambulance, EVAC 232, and personnel (PM Landry and PM Ramirez) who responded to the rescue call described by the caller, was accurate after verifying through CAD records. However, the AVL in the ambulance assigned to EVAC 232 on April 18-19, 2014 indicated that the ambulance never stopped, or even drove by, Fire Station 32 at 2850 Firehouse Road, DeLand for the duration of Landry and Ramirez' shift.

I conducted informal interviews with Danielle Landry and Victoria Ramirez. Both indicated that they had no firsthand knowledge of any relationship between Lt. Chorost and FF Remillard. Both acknowledged that they had heard rumors of an affair between the two but could not confirm. PM Ramirez indicated that she had heard the rumor from EVAC EMT Michael Gallimore.

I contacted EMT Gallimore on September 25, 2014. After he confirmed that he knew Lt. Chorost, I asked him if he knew of any potential misconduct that she may have been involved in. He told me that earlier this year, he estimated around February or March, he and his partner, former EVAC Paramedic Thomas Stanley were at Station 32 when they received a call for service. The call was cancelled shortly after dispatch and they returned to the station. When he

returned, Lt. Chorost and her partner, an unknown male firefighter, could not be located in the common areas of the station. Mr. Gallimore walked upstairs attempting to locate the firefighters. He noted that he made his presence known by yelling "Is anyone here?" Gallimore stated that as he approached the sleeping quarters, he heard what he thought was a bed "squeaking." Suspecting that Lt. Chorost and her partner may have been involved in a sex act, Gallimore told me that he got his partner from downstairs and left the station. EMT Gallimore specified that he did not witness the two firefighters involved in a sex act, just heard the bed "squeaking" and suspected the act.

An internet search indicated that the anonymous caller's phone number, (386)492-3781, is the business phone number for A1A Landscaping in Daytona Beach. Further open source internet searches indicated that Cydney Reagan is the Office Manager at A1A Landscaping.

This information revealed during the preliminary inquiry was provided to Director Recktenwald and Fire Services Director Jeff Smith. Director Smith determined that based upon the information learned during the course of the initial inquiry, an Internal Investigation would be needed to determine whether or not Lt. Chorost and FF Remillard are, or have been, involved in a romantic relationship contrary to HR Bulletin 18 and Fire Services Standard Operating Guidelines. Director Smith requested Director Recktenwald initiate an investigation and I was directed to conduct the investigation on September 30, 2014.

I attempted to identify the date of the incident as reported by EMT Gallimore. After determining the common days worked between EMT Gallimore and Lt. Chorost, I reviewed the AVL (GPS) data from the vehicle(s) assigned to EMT Gallimore on those dates. Based upon what I was told by EMT Gallimore, the incident (bed squeaking) most likely occurred on February 14, 2014 between 1921 and 1928 hours. This is the only shift that I could identify where EMT Gallimore had left Station 32 for a cancelled call and returned for a short period of time.

#### **Nicholas Reagan:**

Suspecting that Cydney Reagan had made the anonymous call to the Personnel Division, I attempted to contact her at her residence in Ormond Beach on September 30, 2014, to gather additional information about the complaint. Mrs. Reagan was at work at the time of my visit but I made contact with Nicholas Reagan at the residence. Mr. Reagan agreed to discuss his relationship with Lt. Chorost in a recorded interview.

Mr. Reagan explained that he and Lt. Chorost had been married and share custody of a child. Since their divorce in 2012, he described their relationship as extremely strained. They are frequently in family court over custody issues and there have been recent incidents between Lt. Chorost and the Reagan's that have further escalated the tension. I explained to Mr. Reagan that Fire Services and Public Protection are aware of the recent issues but they are not the subject of this investigation.

When I asked about his knowledge of an inappropriate relationship between Lt. Chorost and a subordinate Firefighter, Mr. Reagan told me that he had heard from EVAC personnel that Lt. Chorost was caught having sex at one of the fire stations. He explained that he knew several people at EVAC since he was once employed there and had heard this information from them. He was reluctant to disclose the EMS employees' names in fear of repercussions against them. When I asked if he knew who the EVAC employee(s) were that had made this observation, he wasn't sure but stated that they were two newer female employees. Mr. Reagan added that the male firefighter's name was Ryan but he was unsure of a last name. He provided a physical description consistent with Firefighter Ryan Remillard.

Mr. Reagan also stated that he and his wife had seen Lt. Chorost and Ryan at the Cracker Barrel Restaurant together. While at the Cracker Barrel, Lt. Chorost and Ryan were holding hands. Mr. Reagan told me that his wife had observed Lt. Chorost kiss Ryan, but he did not. Mr. Reagan added that his attorney's office is near Lt. Chorost's residence and he has seen "Ryan's" truck parked in the driveway "many times." Lastly, Mr. Reagan told me that on several occasions, Ryan has been with Lt. Chorost for their child's exchanges.

This interview was transcribed and added to the case file as item 5.

**Cydney Reagan:**

I contacted Cydney Reagan at A1A Landscaping in Ormond Beach on September 30, 2014. Mrs. Reagan agreed to a recorded interview in regards to this case.

Mrs. Reagan confirmed that she is Nicholas Reagan's current wife and knows Lt. Chorost through him. Mrs. Reagan described her relationship with Lt. Chorost as "strained at the present time." When questioned in regards to Lt. Chorost's relationship with another firefighter, Mrs. Reagan told me that she frequently sees Ryan Remillard with Lt. Chorost at the child exchanges. She has seen them together at the Cracker Barrel as described by Mr. Reagan. She added that at the Cracker Barrel, Lt. Chorost and FF Remillard were sitting side by side, not across the table. She inferred that they were together as a couple based on this and other affectionate body language. She added that she observed them holding hands and kiss at the Cracker Barrel. Mrs. Reagan was not sure of the date that she made these observations.

Mrs. Reagan told me that she had heard that an EVAC crew had walked in on Lt. Chorost and FF Remillard in bed at one of the fire stations while on duty. She specified that Danielle Landry and Victoria Ramirez, while driving EVAC unit 232 on April 28, 2014, returned to the fire station after call number 141080187 had been cancelled. Once in the station, the two paramedics walked in on Lt. Chorost and FF Remillard in bed. Mrs. Reagan refused to tell me who provided this information to her. Due to her knowledge of this incident, I asked Mrs. Reagan if she was the person who called Personnel on September 23, 2014. She replied "I did, but asked that I wished to remain anonymous because I don't want to cause escalation between me and Laura." After I explained that Paramedics Ramirez and Landry were never at the fire station on that shift, I asked what else she had heard about Lt. Chorost's relationship. Mrs. Reagan responded that she has heard that other fire personnel have seen the two (Chorost and Remillard) out together, being affectionate. Mrs. Reagan also refused to give me the names of the people that told her this information. Mrs. Reagan had no other pertinent information to add regarding this situation.

This interview was transcribed and added to the case file as item 6.

**EMT Michael Gallimore:**

I conducted a sworn witness interview with EMT Gallimore on October 1, 2014. EMT Gallimore told me that he and his former paramedic partner, Thomas Stanley, stopped at Fire Station 32, at 2850 Firehouse Road, Deland on occasion to eat meals and/or take a break. He advised that sometime between January and March of 2014 he and PM Stanley were at Station 32 eating dinner and watching a movie with Lt. Chorost and a male firefighter whose name he did not know. The EMS employees, Gallimore and Stanley, were dispatched to a medical call that was subsequently cancelled upon their arrival at the incident location. They returned to Station to finish the movie but were unable to locate either of the Fire Services personnel. EMT Gallimore told me that he knew that Lt. Chorost and her partner were still at the station since their engine was still in the bay. When he entered the common area of the station, he turned off the television. He continued to look to the fire personnel and as he approached the sleeping quarters,



he heard, what he thought was, a bed squeaking. EMT Gallimore told me that he suspected that Lt. Chorost and her partner were having sex. He quickly went downstairs and left the station with his partner. He stated that this occurred sometime at the beginning of his shift; he estimated between 1730-1930 hours. . EMT Gallimore did not see Lt. Chorost and her Firefighter partner in any type of compromising position. He did not see them at all after returning to Station 32.

I attempted to verify the date of the occurrence but EMT Gallimore could not remember other specific details about the cancelled call or the rest of his shift. EMT Gallimore also stated that he told some EMS employees about the incident including his current partner and Victoria Ramirez. He did not notify any of his supervisors of what he had heard and suspected.

This interview was transcribed and added to the case file as item 7.

#### **Ryan Remillard:**

I conducted a sworn interview with FF Remillard on October 3, 2014 at Fire Station 32. Due to FF Remillard's level of potential involvement, he was allowed to have Lt. Marris present as his union representative and to review the documentation related to this case prior to his interview.

FF Remillard explained that up until recently, Lt. Chorost had been his direct supervisor at Station 32. He told me that they have a professional relationship at work and are friends outside of the workplace. He explained that he has attended some of the child exchanges between Lt. Chorost and her ex-husband, Nickolas Reagan. Lt. Chorost had asked him to attend for support and due to previous issues at the exchanges.

FF Remillard denied that he and Lt. Chorost have ever been involved romantically. When questioned, FF Remillard stated that he and Lt. Chorost have never had any type of sexual relations, kissed, or even held hands. When questioned specifically about the incident as reported by EMT Gallimore, FF Remillard had no recollection of the shift or EMT Gallimore. He denied ever having sex inside the station and stated "Never had sex with her period...no."

This interview was transcribed and added to the case file as item 8.

#### **Lt. Laura Chorost:**

I notified Lt. Chorost of this investigation and her scheduled interview on October 15, 2014. Along with the notification, Lt. Chorost was provided copies of all interview transcripts related to this case as well as the memo documenting the original inquiry into Mrs. Reagan's complaint to the Personnel Division.

On October 24, 2014, I conducted a sworn subject interview with Lt. Chorost. Lt. Chorost was not represented by counsel or a representative and she acknowledged that this was her own choice. Lt. Chorost also acknowledged that she had reviewed all provided information relating to this case prior to this interview.

Lt. Chorost denied that there has ever been a romantic or sexual relationship between her and FF Remillard. Just as stated by FF Remillard, they were co-workers at work and friends outside the workplace. She told me that she has never had sexual relations with, kissed, or even held hands with FF Remillard.

During the interview, the Lieutenant confirmed that FF Remillard had attended child exchanges with her and her ex-husband and had gone to the child pre-school. She stated that she had asked FF Remillard to

attend due to previous disputes that had occurred over custody issues. She also told me that she went to Cracker Barrel in Daytona Beach with FF Remillard for breakfast after one of the child exchanges. However, she denied that she kissed him as stated by Cydney Reagan. Additionally, she told me that while she isn't certain, she would not have been sitting next to FF Remillard at the restaurant but across the table. In regards to Mr. Reagan's statement that he had seen FF Remillard's personal vehicle parked in Lt. Chorost's driveway, the Lieutenant replied by saying that FF Remillard had been to her house in the past for household repairs and to help her with yard work.

In regards to EMT Gallimore's suspicion that she was sexually involved with FF Remillard at Fire Station 32, Lt. Chorost denied this as well. She added that she has never been sexually involved with FF Remillard. Lt. Chorost recognized EMT Gallimore when I showed her a picture, but did not recall the incident as he had stated in the earlier interview. She could not explain

I asked Lt. Chorost why she thought that Cydney Reagan would make these allegations in an anonymous phone call to Personnel. She told me that due to the existence of the rumor about her relationship with a subordinate, along with the very strained relationship that she has with her ex-husband and Mrs. Reagan, this may have been an attempt to harm her reputation. She added that this may not be the last time that these complaints occur due to the ongoing custody dispute.

This interview was transcribed and added to the case file as item 9.

### **Conclusion:**

Mrs. Cydney Reagan contacted the Personnel Division on September 23, 2014 and provided information that Lt. Laura Chorost is having an inappropriate relationship with a subordinate Fire fighter named Ryan Remillard. After contacting the witnesses named in the phone call by Mrs. Reagan, the rumor of the relationship was initiated when EMT Gallimore overheard a bed squeaking in the sleeping quarters of Fire Station 32 and suspect that Lt. Chorost and her partner, FF Remillard, were having sex.

After interviewing Mrs. Reagan during this investigation, she would not provide the names of other EMS/EVAC or Fire Personnel that may be able to confirm the existence of a romantic relationship between Lt. Chorost and FF Remillard. Mrs. Reagan stated in her interview that she had witnessed Lt. Chorost kiss FF Remillard at a local restaurant. Due to the admitted strained relationship between Mrs. Reagan and Lt. Chorost, her testimony cannot be taken as independent and without bias without an admission from either of the Fire Personnel.

Both FF Remillard and Lt. Chorost confirm that they do have a social relationship but deny that relationship is, or ever was, romantic. Even though some of the situations that involve FF Remillard and Lt. Chorost may be suspect, without independent witnesses or other evidence of a romantic relationship, I cannot substantiate nor refute the allegations against Lt. Chorost.

### **Findings:**

Based upon witness testimony, I recommend that the following allegations against Lieutenant Laura Chorost are **not sustained**:

#### ***Human Resources Bulletin 18***

***Volusia County Merit Rules and Regulations. Sec. 86-453. Reasons for disciplinary action (8): Criminal, dishonest or other conduct which interferes with effective job performance or has an adverse effect on the efficiency of county service.***

***Volusia County Merit Rules and Regulations. Sec. 86-453. Reasons for disciplinary action (13): Any conduct, on or off duty, that reflects unfavorably on the county as an employer.***

***Volusia County Division of Fire Services Standard Operating Guidelines 100.041: Members shall not conduct themselves in an immoral, indecent, lewd or disorderly manner. They shall not be guilty of misconduct, conduct unbecoming an officer, or acts that tend to discredit the Department, even though such conduct is not specifically set forth in these rules.***

**Concluding Statement:**

Unless otherwise directed, this investigation is considered closed, and is submitted for review and action as deemed appropriate. The original attachments of interviews and other documents pertaining to this investigation remain on file with the Internal Affairs Unit.

"I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, under penalty of perjury, that, to the best of my personal knowledge, information, and belief, I have not knowingly or willfully deprived, or allowed another to deprive, the subject of the investigation of any of the rights contained in ss.112.532 and 112.533, Florida Statute."

  
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Captain David Vanis

  
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Date