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October 19, 2017

Special Agent Kristen Perry  
Georgia Bureau of Investigation  
Region 8  
79 Cobb Vantress Drive  
Cleveland, GA 30528

Re: Investigation Regarding former Lt. Earl Roach of the Hall County Sheriff's Office  
GBI Case No. 08-0305-14-16

Special Agent Perry:

I have carefully reviewed the file you provided, along with the Hall County Sheriff's Office internal affairs file. I have listened to all interviews and viewed all of the documents provided involving alleged unauthorized use of Hall County School Board Credit card by Lt. Earl Roach for the purchase of guns and other items. The evidence available in this matter leads me to the conclusion that this office could not successfully prosecute Lt. Roach overcoming the standard in a criminal case of proof of criminality beyond a reasonable doubt. Therefore, we will not proceed with an indictment in the matter.

There are, however, some concerns raised by the investigation. The evidence includes fairly extensive purchases of various firearms, a 65 inch television which Roach kept in his house purportedly to monitor the schools after hours, which he claimed he needed to do, a drone (which was a specifically approved purchase) and some insignificant items. Roach was in the position of being in charge of school resource officers. He claimed he was gathering the items purchased to be kept in his care for a "rapid response team" of his own making of which the Sheriff of the county had no knowledge. The necessity of the purchases was open to significant question as to the purchases' propriety and necessity.

That being said, the evidence is that Mr. Roach was given a budget of \$10,000 per year in a line item for "safety and security" with little or no review of how that money was to be used. The evidence shows further that School Resource Officers are not asked to sign any

policies with the school board. In fact, while there was a purchasing order process in place by which specific approval of specific items could be made without the use of a purchasing card, Roach chose in most if not all of the purchases made to use a p-card to which he was given access to make purchases. By doing so, he was able to avoid the scrutiny of the purchasing order method which was subject to a greater level of review. Though he provided receipts for the purchases made, it was rarely immediate, and almost always at the insistence of the employee who managed the p-card. (It was through these receipts that a specific list of the items purchased was created by the school system to facilitate the eventual return of all of the items.)

It seems clear from the evidence that Lt. Roach sought to keep the specific purchases a secret from those who would have been concerned. Lt. Roach took advantage of the lack of regular specific review of purchases by those in authority, and of the fact of no clear policy about the use of the p-card. At one point, Deputy Superintendent Lovett stated during the investigation that there was no policy or procedure to sign in reference to credit card usage, but that he expected that individuals who used the credit card to have common sense to use it appropriately. The evidence also shows, however, Lovett specifically approved of three gun purchases that were made by Roach, albeit perhaps after the fact, totaling almost \$1,000. Mr. Lovett was also aware of and approved the purchase of a drone, which in fact was purchased by Lovett and given to Roach, based on Roach's representation that "they" had authorized such a purchase. Lovett believed by "they" Roach meant the Board, but he stated that he did not confirm this with any board member. Lovett believed that most of the weapons Roach possessed had been provided by the Sheriff's Office, and did not seem to know the full extent of such purchases made with school board funds.

As to the circumstances regarding the return of the items, Roach was on medical leave during the last weeks of his tenure with the Sheriff's department, after which he retired. During an internal investigation Roach was asked by Lovett to return all items purchased with school funds to the school system. While he was somewhat slow in doing so, when provided by the system a complete list of all of the items purchased with the card, he returned all of them within two days, according to Lovett. The fact that he was still in possession of the items purchased over a fairly extensive period of time may be seen to work against criminal intent. Moreover, Roach would likely present testimony that he experienced what he described as "mini strokes" and other distractions during the last of his tenure, and needed the complete list to ensure the return of all of the items.

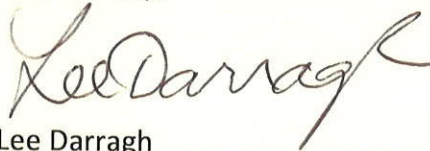
After the return of the items purchased, a Hall County detective with internal affairs asked Mr. Lovett through email whether those items were now considered to be "authorized purchases". Mr. Lovett's response of "That is correct. Lee Lovett" would be of significant damage to a prosecution regarding alleged unauthorized use of the p-card.

It should be noted here that there appears to be no evidence that Superintendent Schofield was even tangentially aware of what was going with Lt. Roach during the time of these purchases. It is possible that that was deliberate on the part of Roach. It also appears

clear that while Mr. Lovett had some knowledge of some of the purchases involved, it seems he likely did not know of the full extent to which this was occurring. Lt. Roach was an erstwhile responsible law enforcement officer for many decades who had attained the rank of Lieutenant. He took advantage of a p-card use system that likely needed improvement and greater supervision. He did so to attain items which were likely not necessary, unknown to his supervisors in the Sheriff's office, who would not have approved of what he was doing: creation of a purported "rapid response team" of which the Sheriff's office had no knowledge (and which already had such resources). While the behavior of Lt. Roach was questionable, under the facts, a jury would not likely find criminal liability.

In the light of all of the circumstances outlined above and those not specifically mentioned in this letter but included with your report, I have concluded that no prosecution could successfully be pursued under the guilt beyond a reasonable doubt standard, so this office will not act further.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lee Darragh". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Lee Darragh  
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