

Office of the Flathead County Attorney

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Vickie M. Eggum, Office Administrator

March 11, 2021

RE: Inquiry on Law Enforcement Involved Crash from Nov. 29, 2020

On November 29, 2020, a car crash occurred that involved a current Flathead County Sheriff's officer and a former Kalispell Police Department officer. This incident and the subsequent investigation came to the attention of the Flathead County Attorney's Office approximately one month after the crash. I reviewed the investigation to ensure any matters pertinent to my office's duties were addressed fully.

Accordingly, I have examined the reports regarding this incident. I also have reviewed the matter with the Kalispell City Attorney's Office, the Attorney General's Office, and eight different officials from the four different law enforcement agencies involved in the incident and subsequent investigation. In light of confidentiality restrictions for both criminal and personnel matters, I cannot provide substantive details regarding the incident or my review. I can disclose, however, the following determinations:

- The criminal aspects of this incident were timely referred to the Attorney General's Office and are being addressed by that office.
- Instances of employee misconduct were handled according to standard procedures. My office's review in such instances is limited solely to whether procedure was properly followed. My office does not review the decision regarding whether discipline is warranted and, if so, the appropriate level of discipline.
- The agencies immediately involved in this matter appropriately referred the incident to outside agencies for independent review.

As with any investigation, my review examined areas for improved agency response. I have discussed with the administrators of the involved agencies ways to improve communication, enhance investigations, and clearly define protocols for independent referrals on incidents involving current or former law enforcement officers. All administrators agree that increased and improved efforts in these areas will help maintain the public's confidence in the integrity of our local law enforcement.

Sincerely,

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ATTORNEY
Flathead County, Montana

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Travis R. Ahner", is written over a horizontal line.

Travis R. Ahner, County Attorney