



High Springs Police Department
23720 N.W. 187th Avenue
High Springs, Florida 32643
(386) 454-1415
J. Antoine Sheppard
Chief of Police



November 2, 2023



A Message to High Springs Residents from Chief Antoine Sheppard

By now, you may have seen a video circulating on YouTube involving High Springs Police Officers handling a trespass service call with a well-known First Amendment auditor with thousands of followers nationwide.

These followers, a vocal minority, inundated our office and other city staff with vulgar -hate speech and messages, phone calls, and emails. Many of these foreign constituents are unreasonable and extremists who live outside of our state, and they do not support any form of law enforcement.

Brief Summary of Incident:

On September 28, 2023, HSPD patrol officers responded to a local children's daycare center concerning a disturbance between a citizen and the daycare employees. Reportedly, the citizen kept walking near the daycare where children were present, and a verbal altercation began. The auditor started video recording the incident and was subsequently issued a trespass warning from the property.

Initially, the auditor praised the agency on how the matter was conducted but later found a discrepancy with a statement by HSPD officers that he was recording children at the daycare. The citizen also had displeasure with another officer being captured on body camera after the service call, saying, "What a Whacko,"

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This matter was corrected and cured immediately:

- The property owner was contacted and updated on the accurate sequence of events, and the property owner reaffirmed the trespass. There was no intent to deceive the property owner on the recording of children, just miscommunication during the transaction of the service call. The accused officer is a veteran police officer with an exemplary record with our agency.
- The Secondary officer was counseled and reminded to deactivate her body-worn camera system after the service call. The officer's statement was inadvertently captured on video footage and limited to her opinion and shared with her colleagues in a private setting and not directly to any member of the public. The statement was not egregious or derogatory.

Afterward, I verbally apologized to the citizens on behalf of the agency for the oversight, and I reintroduced the continuous training that we have incorporated within our agency to recognize the First Amendment Rights of our citizens.

In closing, I am so grateful to live and work in a community that is pro-law enforcement, and what I mean by that is community-based law enforcement that is transparent and held accountable by a balanced approach. We are not perfect, but we strive for perfection, and we will continue to serve selflessly.

Antoine Sheppard

Chief Antoine Sheppard – High Springs Police Dept.

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