Officer resigns from Manchester force following questions of moonlighting as private investigator | New Hampshire Public Safety

By MARK HAYWARD
New Hampshire Union Leader

MANCHESTER — A Manchester police officer quit her job earlier this summer when facing an internal investigation into whether she was moonlighting as a private investigator, a potential misdemeanor, the department's deputy chief said on Monday.

Michelle Toepel, who was the school resource officer at Memorial High School last year, resigned on July 25, Deputy Police Chief Nick Willard said.

State law prohibits any law enforcement officer from working as a private investigator; violation of the provision is a misdemeanor.

Willard said the department's internal affairs unit began an investigation on July 21 after Plymouth police notified Manchester that Toepel reportedly had moonlighted as a private investigator.

"We got notification, we initiated an immediate internal affairs investigation, and within five days of that investigation, she resigned," Willard said.

In 2012, the Queen City Rotary named Toepel the police officer of the year, Willard said. Toepel had been a Manchester police officer since November 2008. She started her police career in Campton in April 2007, according to Tim Merrill of the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council.

Toepel’s police certification lapsed on Aug. 25 — 30 days after she resigned, which is normal procedure for police certification, he said.

Memorial Principal Arthur Adamakos said he learned this summer that Officer Ferdinand Cruz was replacing Toepel, who had been school resource officer for the 2013-14 school year.

“She did a great job for us,” Adamakos said. “She was efficient. She did everything we asked her to do.”

Willard said he was uncertain of where Toepel was moonlighting. Plymouth police indicated it was...
outside of Grafton County, and the Grafton County Attorney was handling the investigation. Grafton County Attorney Lara Joan Saffo said Monday that she couldn’t comment on whether an investigation was taking place, but she has no reports of a private investigator working in Grafton County without a license.

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RICK STEFANIK said:

One of Maras cops breaking the law and they knew NOTHING about it??NO WAY!! If this doesn’t show that he is as unqualified as a monkey to run the dept. then not much else will! I have lost count of how many “officers” have landed on the wrong side of the laws they are SWORN to enforce.Clearly there is a “I can do what I want” mentality in the police department.Will we the city wake up and see that we need more integrity and less lawlessness?

(Report Abuse) September 9, 2014 8:17 am

mia green said:

Shut it Rick

(Report Abuse) September 9, 2014 9:33 am

Mary Lussier said:

A Rotary police officer of the year resigns due to a misdemeanor unrelated to her duties as police officer (a second job in a different county), when officers who have done worse stay on the job? It’s refreshing and admirable to see an officer with high self-expectations hold herself accountable. But perhaps an unpaid suspension would have been more appropriate. Unless there is much more to this story, this sounds like a real loss for the City of Manchester.

(Report Abuse) September 9, 2014 10:03 am
Dave Bigelow said:

Sorry Mary Lussier, although I am glad that she didn't try to defend this if she did do it. Like Steven Coco would, oh I didn't realize I was moonlighting as a private detective because I was to busy using my cell phone so didn't even realize I had done something wrong. However one of the duties of a police officer according to the law is not to be a private detective while being employed as a cop.

(Report Abuse) September 9, 2014 10:54 am

Curt Howard said:

Kill people, rob people, beat people up, the Thin Blue Line will stand firm. Actually try to be productive and help people? Quick! Resign while you still can! I sincerely hope the former tax leach makes a good living being a productive member of the community now that she's found out just how thin that Blue Line really is.

(Report Abuse) September 9, 2014 3:01 pm

DUANE RILEY said:

First off ... Why wasn't she charged !!! Secondly ... NO loss ! Female cops are useless ! Worthless and weak !

(Report Abuse) September 9, 2014 4:31 pm

Travis Liles said:

Duane, I would assume with the Grafton County Attorney who was in charge of the investigation not commenting, the investigation is still underway and charges could come at some point. That said, she has resigned and I see no point is using resources to prosecute her for a misdemeanor.

(Report Abuse) September 9, 2014 5:25 pm

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