

NEW IBERIA MUNICIPAL FIRE AND POLICE CIVIL SERVICE BOARD

CITY OF NEW IBERIA

PARISH OF IBERIA

STATE OF LOUISIANA

PETITION FOR INVESTIGATION

NO.: _____ FILED: _____

BEFORE THE BOARD, comes Cassie Duhon, a qualified elector domiciled in New Iberia, Louisiana, who respectfully submit the following allegations to the New Iberia Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board (the Board), which are based on information and belief:

1.

Pursuant to LSA-R.S. 33:2477, the Board is vested with broad duties and powers, including without limitation:

- Taking **any action which, it determines to be desirable or necessary in the public interest**, or to carry out effectively the provisions and purposes of this Part;
- **Representing the public interest in matters of personnel administration** for the City of New Iberia;
- **Advising and assisting the City Council, Mayor and Chief of Police** for the City of New Iberia, with reference **to the maintenance and improvement of personnel standards and administration in police services, and the classified system**;
- **Making reports to the governing body**, either upon its own motion or upon the official request of the governing body, **regarding general or special matters of personnel administration** in and for the New Iberia Police Department (NIPD); and

- **Upon the written petition of any citizen for just cause**, or upon its own motion, **making an investigation concerning the administration of personnel or the compliance with the provisions of this Part in the said municipal police services.**

2.

LSA-R.S. 33:2500(C) provides: “Although it is incumbent upon the appointing authority to initiate corrective or disciplinary action, the board may, and **shall upon the written request of any qualified elector of the state which sets out the reasons thereof, make an investigation of the conduct and performance of any employee** in the classified service and, thereupon may render such judgment and order action to be taken by the appointing authority. Such action shall be forthwith taken by the appointing authority.”

3.

LSA-R.S. 33:2505 provides: “**No person shall:** (4) **Require any employee in the classified service to** perform an act, or **neglect an act**, which would be reason for dismissal or disciplinary action of the employee.”

4.

LSA-R.S. 33:2507 provides: “**Whoever willfully violates any provision of this Part** or of the rules **shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars and shall, for a period of six years, be ineligible for appointment to or employment in any position of the classified service.** If he is an officer or employee of the classified service he **shall forfeit his office or position.**

5.

Pursuant to Rule V, Section 3 of the New Iberia Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Rules: “Written requests showing just cause for hearings and investigations shall be granted at the first board meeting following receipt of the request or at a special meeting. Investigations conducted under the provisions of R.S. 33:2477 (4) and (5) shall be completed within sixty (60) calendar days of the board’s receipt of the request.”

FACTS:

6.

At all times relevant hereto, the petitioner, Cassie Duhon, was a regular and permanent member of the Classified Service with the New Iberia Police Department.

7.

At all times relevant hereto, New Iberia Chief of Police, Todd D’Albor, was a regular and permanent member of the Classified Service with the New Iberia Police Department.

I submit this Petition of Investigation to report discriminatory practices, retaliation, a hostile work environment and violations of established civil service procedures. Recently after I engaged in protected communication making a good-faith disclosure of potentially improper conduct regarding possible falsified affidavits, I was subjected to escalating hostility and ultimately demoted under false pretext. I respectfully request an investigation and restoration of my rank.

On January 6, 2025, I was promoted from Administrative Lieutenant to the position of Captain of the Criminal Investigations Division within the New Iberia Police Department. Shortly thereafter I was made aware of an ongoing issue involving a former detective, Coquina Mitchell, who was suspected of providing false information in a search warrant related to a double-homicide investigation. This information was brought to my attention in January of 2025 as I became acquainted with all open homicide cases due to my new assignment to the Criminal Investigations Division. I was told by Lt. Kellen Landry that he reported the matter the previous year to Captain Leland Laseter and Chief Todd D’Albor.

On January 13, 2025, I had a meeting with Chief D’Albor to discuss the possible malfeasance and misconduct. Chief D’Albor confirmed having knowledge of the allegations concerning former detective Mitchell indicating that the incident had been reported to him the previous year.

On September 4, 2025, the New Iberia Police Department received an email concerning the homicide investigation which was the subject of the alleged misconduct by former detective Mitchell. Chief D’Albor requested an update. On September 8, 2025, in our weekly meeting I informed Chief D’Albor that the case he requested an update on was the case he paused due to Mitchell allegedly lying under oath in an affidavit to secure a search warrant. At this time Chief D’Albor, Mayor Freddie Decourt and Captain Leland Laseter all indicated that this was the first time they had heard of such allegations. I attempted to remind Chief D’Albor and Captain Laseter of the prior discussion regarding these allegations. Chief D’Albor immediately warned me about “going around making such serious accusations” at which time I reminded him that I was told this information by Lt. Landry. Captain Ryan Boutte, Professional Standards Captain, then suggested that he could investigate the incident and provide a disclosure to the District Attorney’s Office, if a disclosure is needed. Chief D’Albor then granted permission to proceed with an investigation but advised for this “to not leave this room”.

September 8, 2025, as Lt. Landry and I reviewed the case, providing Captain Boutte with the information he needed, we began to see leads in the case that could still be worked in an attempt resolve the unsolved double homicide. Due to the serious ethical and legal implications, I, along with Lt. Kellen Landry, discussed this matter with the District Attorney’s Office during a scheduled monthly meeting on September 9, 2025, in order to obtain guidance on how to properly address the tainted documents and move the stalled homicide investigation forward. At the time, the case had been inactive for more than a year, prior to my promotion. My communication with the District Attorney’s Office was made in good faith and solely in furtherance of public safety and prosecutorial integrity. During this meeting, the District Attorney’s Office expressed concern regarding the lack of disclosure by our agency and requested a report from the New Iberia Police Department regarding the findings.

On September 19, 2025, Mayor Freddie Decourt attended a meeting with the District Attorney’s Office. At that time it became known that I had communicated with the District Attorney’s Office, and the work environment changed significantly. Chief D’Albor began making comments such as, “Let’s see how I will be blindsided this week,” upon entering rooms where I was present. Meetings became extremely tense, and I observed consistent dismissive behavior toward me, including heavy sighs, eye-rolling, and refusal to engage when I spoke. Normal professional communication from upper administration ceased, contributing to a hostile work environment.

On September 25, 2025, while attempting to speak with Assistant Chief Brandon Williams regarding an unrelated matter, I encountered him in the Commander’s office with Chief D’Albor and Commander Seth Pellerin present. During this interaction, Chief D’Albor stated that I had “pissed him off” and criticized Captain Boutte’s report as “so inaccurate and poorly written.” Chief D’Albor further stated that “there was nothing to disclose,” that the issue was “blown out of proportion,” and that it was “caught by Lt. Landry before anything was executed.” During this exchange, both Assistant Chief Williams and Commander Pellerin remained silent but nodded in agreement. This encounter further intensified the hostile nature of the workplace.

On October 16, 2025, Commander Pellerin requested that I meet with him for what he described as a “fact-finding” meeting regarding alleged insubordination. During this meeting, he questioned me about the administrative meeting where I initially raised concerns about the former detective Mitchell’s affidavits to search warrants, and whether I had informed the District Attorney’s Office on September 9, 2025. I confirmed that I had and reiterated that my intent was to seek guidance on how best to proceed with the double-homicide investigation without jeopardizing the integrity of the case further. Commander Pellerin stated that the District Attorney’s Office had “overreacted” and that there was “nothing that needed to be reported” , emphasizing the word “NOTHING.” He questioned me about my personal communications with colleagues and criticized Captain Boutte’s report as “poorly written.” He concluded by stating that his findings would be forwarded to Internal Affairs (Professional Standards) for further disciplinary action, although he characterized the meeting as merely “fact finding.” When I asked whether I would face demotion, he stated that he did not know the outcome. It should be noted that I was not provided any notice that I was under administrative investigation at this time, nor was I given an opportunity to procure counsel.

On October 20, 2025 I was instructed by Assistant Chief Williams to report to Chief D’Albor’s office. At the conclusion of a brief administrative meeting, Chief D’Albor stated that he had received Commanders Pellerin’s findings and would be meeting with Mayor DeCourt to determine how to proceed “for the betterment of the department.” He then laughed and stated, “Thank goodness I remembered that phone call I placed to Ashley and advised her right away last year,” referencing the ongoing situation.

On the morning of October 21, 2025, I was summoned to Assistant Chief Williams’ office, where Chief D’Albor informed me that, effective the following Monday, October 27, 2025, I would be demoted to Lieutenant on Patrol. When I asserted that I could not legally be disciplined for disclosing case-related information to the District Attorney’s Office, Chief D’Albor scoffed and replied that he “figured I would seek legal advice.” He then stated that the demotion was “not disciplinary,” but rather due to my failure to meet standards during my working test period as Captain. When asked to identify the specific standard I failed to meet, he cited “insubordination.”

Chief D’Albor alleged that I was insubordinate, claiming that he had directed that the information “not leave the room.” At the time of that statement, I understood his direction to mean preventing rumor-spreading within the division—not withholding critical information from the District Attorney’s Office concerning an unresolved double-homicide investigation and the integrity of all other cases which former Mitchell may have played a critical role in. At no point did I knowingly or intentionally disregard or violate a lawful order.

I firmly assert that this demotion was not based on performance, incompetence, or insubordination, but was retaliatory in nature due to my lawful and ethical disclosure of information that could reflect negatively on Chief D’Albor and the department. During my tenure as Captain, my focus was on correcting longstanding deficiencies in record-keeping and investigative practices.

This is not the first instance in which Chief D’Albor’s anger has adversely affected my career or rank as Captain. Approximately one year prior, during my promotion process to Captain, I raised concerns regarding unequal opportunities afforded to his step-daughter, Morgan Delcambre. My

promotion was subsequently paused, and I was instructed by Assistant Chief Williams that I would need to request a meeting with the Chief and apologize in order to proceed. I complied, clarifying that my concern was not an accusation of nepotism, but rather how I would explain the decision to others senior to her who had expressed interest in the same position. Only after apologizing did the promotion move forward, accompanied by a warning that if I ever raised the issue again, I would be “on the chopping block.”

Additionally, I have been compensated less than other members of the department while required to do more work. As a Sergeant on Patrol, I received six hours of overtime per pay period as compensation for my role as Field Training Coordinator and the additional workload this entailed. Upon my promotion to Administrative Lieutenant of Patrol, Chief D’Albor advised me that this role would now be part of my regular job duties and I would no longer receive compensation for the additional work. Following my promotion to Captain of CID, Lieutenant Derrick Roque from Professional Standards took over as Field Training Coordinator.

In February of 2025 I learned Lt. Roque was receiving additional compensation for the Coordinator’s position. I questioned AC Williams as to why Lt Roque received additional pay for the Coordinator’s position while I had been told that role was part of my job duties as Lieutenant. AC Williams advised me that it was his understanding that I had received compensation during my time as Coordinator. After I informed him that I had not and questioned if I could receive back pay for the period I was uncompensated, AC Williams became flustered and stated he “could not answer for the Chief’s decisions”. AC Williams then informed me that Lt. Roque’s incentive pay was the first of many such incentives that would be forthcoming within the department and that his happened first because he had just taken over the position from me.

In the twelve months since Lt. Roque took over as Coordinator no such incentives as described by AC Williams have occurred within the department. As a direct result of these decisions, I worked as Lieutenant for three years and served as Field Training Coordinator with no compensation for the additional work or responsibilities while a male counterpart of the same rank was provided such compensation immediately upon taking over the position from me.

I respectfully request that the Civil Service Board conduct a thorough investigation into these matters to ensure compliance with civil service regulations, protect employees from retaliation, and restore integrity and trust within the New Iberia Police Department.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, Petitioner, Cassie Duhon prays that this Board receive this Petition, grant the request for an investigation, conduct said investigation, make a report to the governing body and appointing authority, render a judgment and order action to be taken by the appointing authority and/or take any other action which it determines to be desirable

or necessary in the public interest or to carry out effectively the provisions and purposes of LSA-R.S. 33:2471, et seq.

Submitted By:

Cassie Duhon

