

**SHASTA COUNTY  
SHERIFF'S  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OFFICERS**

Capt. Pat Kropholler  
President

Lt. Tyler Thompson  
Vice President

Capt. Gene Randall  
Secretary/Treasurer



## **NEWS RELEASE**


June 21, 2021

Shasta County Sheriff-Coroner Eric Magrini has announced his formal resignation from the Sheriff's Office and expressed he is set to begin duties as the newly formed Assistant County Executive Officer. The county has seen fit to extend that position to Mr. Magrini despite knowledge that formal letters indicating lack of confidence in Mr. Magrini's leadership were served by both the Deputy Sheriff's Association (DSA) and the Sheriff's Administration Association (SAA). (The SAA consists of the Command Staff Members of the Sheriff's Office, Captains and Lieutenants and does not include the Sheriff or Undersheriff). In short, it appears the county feels that removing him from the poor job he was doing as sheriff and giving him even greater responsibility over the public safety budget will resolve the issues they have been advised of.

The following represents a timeline of the events that have transpired to inform the citizens of Shasta County of the SAA's attempt to improve the working conditions for the employees of the Sheriff's Office so they could better fulfill their mission of Public Safety:

On February 17, 2021, a formal letter was drafted and sent to the Shasta County Board of Supervisors by the SAA outlining concerns with leadership, morale, and potential illegal and unethical behaviors engaged in by Sheriff Magrini and/or Undersheriff Jason Barnhart. Sheriff Magrini, Shasta County CEO Matt Pontes, County Counsel Rubin Cruse, Jr., and the DSA were all issued copies of the letter as well. In this letter the SAA formally stated that membership held a vote and concurred that Sheriff Magrini and Undersheriff Barnhart have failed to successfully lead and supervise the members of the Sheriff's Office and there is no confidence in their leadership. An outside investigator was requested by the membership to look into the concerns. To date, no sitting member of the Shasta County Board of Supervisors have made any contact with the SAA regarding the expressed issues with the sheriff. (See attached copy of letter to BOS).

March 3, 2021, a letter was sent to the SAA by CEO Matt Pontes advising that he was in receipt of the written complaint and was taking the concerns brought forth seriously. Mr. Pontes referred the matter to local Private Investigator Diane Davis for investigation.



March 4, 2021, a letter was drafted by the SAA and sent to CEO Pontes regarding the county choosing Diane Davis as investigator. Due to her previous working relationship with many of the Sheriff's Office personnel/administration, the SAA again requested an outside investigator to prevent any conflict-of-interest concerns and to preserve transparency.


March 10, 2021, a letter was sent to the SAA from CEO Pontes stating that while he had confidence in Ms. Davis, the county had retained the services of Ellis & Makus, LLC to conduct the investigation.

March 23, 2021, Attorney Leslie Ellis contacted the SAA to introduce herself and set up interviews. SAA Board Members inquired regarding the goals of the investigation, how the results would be released and whether Ms. Ellis was authorized to compel personnel to comply with interviews. Ms. Ellis stated she was contracted by Shasta County and answered directly to CEO Matt Pontes. She further stated the results of the investigation would most likely be classified as attorney/client work product and any release would be up to her client. She was not authorized to compel compliance with interviews.

As a result, the SAA had concerns that the investigation would not be transparent and chose to seek the advice of outside counsel. Ms. Ellis set an interview with the SAA President for April 7, 2021. The president later cancelled that meeting advising her that he'd prefer to be represented by counsel when interviewed and that his attorney would be contacting her due to concerns that he should be protected under both the Whistleblower Protection Act (California Government Code § 8547.1, et seq.) and California Labor Code § 1102.5. On the advice of outside counsel, the SAA President began drafting a detailed letter regarding the concerns the SAA had referenced in the February 17, 2021, letter.

April 7, 2021, a letter was received from CEO Pontes demanding the referenced letter be provided to Ms. Ellis by April 9, 2021, or he would consider the matter to be abandoned by the SAA. The requested letter was submitted to Ms. Ellis via outside counsel representing the SAA President on April 8, 2021.

April 8, 2021, The SAA President presented a fourteen-page document drafted with assistance of counsel detailing the issues that were referenced in the February 17, 2021, letter to the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Ellis was to review the letter, conduct interviews of the witnesses as well as other staff and then recontact the SAA President's counsel to arrange for a follow up interview and request any documents she still required for her investigation. Despite interviewing many Sheriff's Office Administrators, Deputies and Support Staff, Ms. Ellis never sent any additional questions to the SAA President for follow up nor did she request any additional documents.



June 14, 2021, a letter was received by the SAA via email from the Office of County Counsel, Rubin Cruse Jr. The letter was titled: *Re: Completion of the Investigation of February 17, 2021, Complaint*. The letter states there were 15 areas of concern identified. Of those the investigator found 11 areas were not sustained and 4 sustained. Of those that were sustained, they list reasons such as “inadvertent mistakes” made in the hiring process, or statements made by the Sheriff were in “jest or out of frustration” but weren’t intentional misconduct. The illegal behavior referenced by the SAA letter was not addressed.

Mr. Cruse also stated that due to the SAA President declining to be interviewed or provide Ms. Ellis with documentation, she concluded her investigation based on interviews with other witnesses. The SAA President did not decline to be interviewed and had provided a detailed written account of the events that had transpired during Mr. Magrini’s tenure. Ms. Ellis never made any formal request for further documentation, nor did she forward any additional questions. Additionally, most of the information provided by the SAA President could be corroborated by other witnesses.

Based on the SAA’s internal review of the investigation process and voluntary statements made by those who were interviewed, the SAA has concluded that the results of the investigation are inherently inaccurate or may have been poorly presented to County Counsel. As the body of the investigation has not been made available to the association, or the public, there is no way to ensure that the investigator properly documented statements made by those she interviewed which would have clearly indicated that the matters presented for investigation were sustained.

County Counsel ended the letter by stating that since Mr. Magrini was taking another position, the problem is essentially solved, and the Board of Supervisors would no longer have any direct role in overseeing the complaints against Eric Magrini as Sheriff-Coroner. Essentially the SAA has been informed Mr. Magrini will not have to worry that the investigation will be re-opened and there will be no accountability for his unethical/illegal behavior, the hostile working environment employees of the Sheriff’s Office had to endure, nor will he ever have to answer to the citizens of Shasta County for his failure to discharge the duties of Sheriff-Coroner in a manner they deserved. In order to move forward, any future Sheriff-Coroner appointee will need to repair the damaged relationships that have occurred both within the Sheriff’s Office and with allied agencies. It is imperative that personnel of the Sheriff’s Office be given the support they require to live up to their mission of serving all citizens of Shasta County with pride and excellence.

Any further information should be directed to a member of the SAA Board of Directors using the listed contact information.

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**ADMINISTRATIVE  
ASSOCIATION**


February 17, 2021

Joe Chimenti, District 1, Chair  
Les Baugh, District 5, Vice-Chair  
Leonard Moty, District 2  
Mary Rickert, District 3  
Patrick Jones, District 4

Shasta County Board of Supervisors  
1450 Court Street Suite 308B  
Redding, CA 96001

Dear Members of the Board,


The Shasta County Sheriff's Office is currently experiencing a decline in morale which has led to the loss of efficiency as an agency. The lack of effective communication between the department head and command staff has resulted in misinformation, mistrust and ultimately a loss in confidence in those who have been appointed to lead the department. It has also led to strained relationships with local allied agencies which can impede the ability of the agencies to function together cohesively in times of crisis.



Appointed Sheriff Eric Magrini and Undersheriff Jason Barnhart were made fully aware of the specific concerns of line staff and of those in management on multiple occasions, most recently, on January 6, 2021 by the three division commanders. These concerns have been reluctantly acknowledged but then ultimately ignored. The lack of true concern is evident by the Sheriff stating that there would be weekly meetings to work on resolving the issues until all had been solved. However, there was only one follow up meeting on January 13, 2021 no resolutions were identified, and no further meetings scheduled. At the January 13, 2021 meeting Sheriff Magrini was advised there had been a poll taken by the Deputy Sheriff's Association (DSA) to determine if they would issue a formal vote of "no confidence". This was brought to his attention to reiterate the issues the DSA had previously addressed with him. Sheriff Magrini's response was "f--k 'em, they can't do anything to me anyway". He further went on to request the names of the parties in the DSA who were "leading the push" , the intent of the request was retaliatory in nature, but no specific methods provided. The three division commanders also formally advised the Sheriff that the working environment had become extremely hostile, to the point where both support and sworn staff are avoiding having to set foot on the third floor of the office (administration). Neither the Sheriff or the Undersheriff addressed the hostile working environment or put forth any potential solutions to repair the issues brought to their attention.

Additionally, there have been serious breaches of ethical and legal conduct by Sheriff Magrini, which include but are not limited to misuse of law enforcement systems, misuse of public/grant funding, providing false public statements and purposely concealing documents to prevent public records requests. All of these occurrences have been witnessed by either one or more command, line or support staff members.


On January 27, 2021 the Deputy Sheriff's Association held a vote that confirmed their membership has "no confidence" in the Sheriff and Undersheriff. They served a letter detailing their concerns to Sheriff Magrini on February 8, 2021 and a copy was sent to the Sheriff's Administrative Association (SAA), that letter is attached. The issues they bring forth are ones they have been attempting to resolve with the Sheriff for approximately one year.



It appears that all attempts to mitigate the concerns have been exhausted and it is evident that the only recourse is to bring the issues to the attention of the Board of Supervisors and the community. Therefore, it is with deep disappointment that the Sheriff's Administrative Association has also voted that Sheriff Magrini and Undersheriff Barnhart have failed to successfully lead and supervise the members of the Sheriff's Office and there is no confidence in their leadership. The Sheriff has gone on record to state that his leadership philosophy is to "divide and conquer" which has led to the hostile and unproductive working environment that exists today.

We respectfully bring this to the attention of the Board of Supervisors and request that an outside investigator be retained to review the actions of the Sheriff and the operational functions of the Sheriff's Office. It is imperative that an outside investigator is used as Sheriff Magrini has shown a propensity for vindictive and retaliatory behavior. The only way to ensure a fair, transparent and complete review is conducted is to protect the anonymity of the personnel that will need to be interviewed. To further provide an example of Sheriff Magrini's vindictiveness, pertaining to his views of the BOS, on January 11, 2021 in response to the BOS request for additional security, the Sheriff relayed that he felt games are being played between BOS members, Moty, Jones and Baugh, he didn't want to be caught up in their games. The Sheriff doesn't trust any BOS members after the BOS vote on December 15, 2020 in which the board "went against their word to give him the raise he'd been promised." As a result of that animus, of the fifteen deputies requested by the BOS for security, Sheriff Magrini only sent two. Those two deputies were given instruction to stay off site and respond to emergencies only.

As dedicated professionals we feel that the safety of our community is paramount, and it cannot be achieved effectively under the current conditions that exist within the Sheriff's Office. If resolution cannot be achieved, our only option will be to make notification to the California Attorney General or determine if recall proceedings are feasible, our hope is that this will not be necessary. Our primary objective is to ensure that all Sheriff's Office personnel are treated fairly, respectfully and provided the support they are entitled, through effective and engaged leadership.



We request to hear from a representative of the board, in writing by March 12, 2021 to ensure the board is in receipt of this letter and whether the board is able to accommodate the request for an outside investigator. Our association board members will make themselves available if you wish to meet or teleconference to discuss the matter further.

Respectfully,

Shasta County Sheriff's Administrative Association

encl: DSA Letter

cc: Shasta County Sheriff Eric Magrini  
Shasta County CEO Matthew Pontes  
Shasta County Counsel, Rubin Cruse, Jr.  
Shasta County Deputy Sheriff's Association

