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DOOR COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

DOOR COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

Door County Sheriff's Office
1201 S. Duluth Avenue
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Date: 6/1/26

TO:

Sheriff Tammy Sternard
Door County Sheriff's Office
1201 S. Duluth Avenue
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Subject: Delivery of Formal Vote of No Confidence

Sheriff Sternard,

On behalf of the membership of the Door County Deputy Sheriffs' Association, enclosed please find a resolution adopted by the Association following a formal vote of no confidence in your leadership.

This action was not taken lightly. It followed extensive discussion and deliberation among the membership and reflects a collective decision by the deputies of this agency. This resolution reflects the collective judgment of the membership regarding a pattern of concerns impacting leadership, communication, engagement, and trust within the agency. The intent of this correspondence and resolution is to formally communicate the outcome of that process in a professional and transparent manner.

The Association recognizes the significance of this step and remains committed to maintaining professionalism and respect in all future interactions as we continue to serve the citizens of Door County. The Association will not be making any further statements on these issues.

Respectfully,

On behalf of the membership of the Door County Deputy Sheriffs' Association,

Chris Neuville, President
Bryan Geisel, Vice President
Matt Tassoul, Treasurer

Enclosure: Resolution – Vote of No Confidence

DOOR COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

Door County Sheriff's Office
1201 S. Duluth Avenue
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

Date: 6/1/26

TO:

Sheriff Tammy Sternard
Door County Sheriff's Office
1201 S. Duluth Avenue
Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235

CC:

Ken Pabich, County Administrator
Collin Jeanquart, Chair – Judiciary & Public Safety Committee

Subject: Formal Vote of No Confidence in Sheriff Tammy Sternard

The Door County Deputy Sheriffs' Association, representing the sworn deputies of the Door County Sheriff's Office, convened a formal meeting pursuant to Association bylaws to address widespread and continuing concerns regarding the leadership of Sheriff Tammy Sternard. Following deliberation, the membership of this Association cast a formal Vote of No Confidence in Sheriff Sternard's leadership and direction of this Sheriff's Office.

The Association acknowledges that Sheriff Sternard has implemented certain positive changes during her tenure. This resolution does not seek to diminish those efforts. However, those positives have been deeply overshadowed by ongoing issues in leadership, communication, lack of mere presence, and trust that have eroded confidence among the deputies she was elected to lead. As detailed below, these concerns include issues of internal morale, public communication, and the consistent application of the Office's stated values.

Whereas, on September 20, 2024, a deputy discharged his firearm to eliminate a feral pig within the county. The Sheriff's handling of that incident — particularly the public statement issued by her office — created the impression that the involved deputy was under investigation or disciplinary review. This statement undermined confidence in the Sheriff's willingness to stand behind her deputies during any future officer-involved shooting or critical incident;

Whereas, morale within the Sheriff's Office, particularly in the Jail Division, has deteriorated significantly due to ongoing staffing issues, the two-male minimum staffing

policy, and a broader lack of workplace support. Deputies have repeatedly raised concerns regarding staffing practices and operational inefficiencies that have resulted in excessive overtime, contributed to employee resignations, and created a cycle of increasing workload and declining morale. In meetings with both Jail and Patrol Divisions where these concerns were raised directly to the Sheriff, her response — that morale was “their problem” — was widely viewed as dismissive and emblematic of a broader failure to take responsibility for leadership and team welfare;

Whereas, the Door County Sheriff’s Office has represented that it established a peer support program and provides access to a certified therapy dog for deputy wellness; however, these resources have not been implemented in a consistent, structured, or accessible manner, as evidenced by the absence of clear policy, limited utilization, and low participation in peer support efforts. Additionally, despite communication to staff on June 19, 2024 indicating that therapy dog policy and procedures had been completed and would be shared at a later date, no such information has been distributed as of the date of this resolution. These shortcomings have contributed to diminished morale and further undermined confidence in leadership’s commitment to deputy wellness and support;

Whereas, effective leadership within a law enforcement agency requires visible command presence and engagement during critical and high-risk incidents. During the Sheriff’s tenure, many deputies perceive a consistent lack of such presence, as the Sheriff has not been visibly present at major or critical incidents to the knowledge of the membership. This absence represents a departure from prior administrations, where Sheriffs were routinely present at large-scale county incidents, fostering a strong sense of leadership and teamwork, enhancing morale, and reinforcing the role of the Sheriff within the community;

Whereas, the Sheriff has failed to regularly attend monthly Public Safety meetings involving county leadership and partner agencies and has not personally attended such a meeting since June 2023 to the knowledge of the membership. These meetings play a critical role in maintaining public safety through coordination, communication, and collaboration among local agencies. Given their importance, attendance by the head of the agency is essential and should not be routinely delegated to subordinate staff members. In contrast, other county public safety department heads have maintained consistent attendance and active participation in these meetings while overseeing stable and effective operations, reinforcing the importance of direct leadership involvement at the departmental level;

Whereas, the Sheriff’s Office routinely utilizes social media and public messaging to highlight select activities and accomplishments; however, numerous high-risk and critical incidents handled professionally by deputies have gone entirely unacknowledged publicly, including incidents involving shots fired, stabbings, armed barricades,

significant traffic crashes (including fatalities), suicides, significant weather events, and drownings. During at least one incident in which deputies were fired upon, no public acknowledgment or communication was made to inform the community of the seriousness of the event. Subsequent media coverage prompted public concern regarding the lack of prior transparency, reinforcing a perception that critical incidents are selectively withheld from public awareness. The absence of any public recognition or acknowledgment of these events has led many deputies to believe that the realities and risks of their work are being minimized, while messaging priorities appear focused on content that reflects positively on the administration rather than accurately representing the scope and seriousness of law enforcement activity within Door County. Such perceptions have the potential to erode public trust and may make interactions between deputies and community members more difficult or contentious if there is a belief that the Sheriff's Office is not being fully transparent about significant events;

Whereas, in addition, in the past year, two members of the agency received recognition for their achievements from outside entities, and these recognitions were publicized on the Sheriff's Office social media channels; however, no internal notification or acknowledgment was provided to agency personnel. This omission has led many deputies to feel that while individual accomplishments may be highlighted publicly to enhance the Office's image, equal effort is not made to recognize or celebrate those achievements internally, depriving coworkers of the opportunity to acknowledge and support one another and further undermining morale;

Whereas, furthermore, during at least one critical incident in which responding deputies were fired upon, specialized resources were not deployed, and no formal explanation or after-action communication was provided to the agency regarding that decision. This lack of transparency has raised serious concerns among patrol deputies regarding whether appropriate support, including specialized response capabilities, would be authorized in future critical incidents, thereby eroding confidence in command-level decision-making during high-risk events;

Whereas, although a contract was eventually finalized, the negotiation process took far longer than expected and was made substantially more difficult by the Sheriff's continued insistence on promoting a 12-hour shift schedule after the membership had formally voted to remove the issue from bargaining. The intent of that vote was to allow negotiations to remain focused on priority concerns, with the understanding that any discussion of a 12-hour schedule would occur through a committee after a contract was completed. Despite this clear direction, the proposal continued to reappear, driving frustration and delaying progress. Compounding this issue was the Sheriff's public admission that she herself would not want to work a 12-hour schedule, raising concerns about the sincerity and consistency of her position. Taken together, these factors led the membership to conclude that the Sheriff's involvement prolonged negotiations

unnecessarily and contributed to a perception that the County's posture had become increasingly adversarial;

Whereas, the Sheriff has repeatedly emphasized the core values of Integrity, Professionalism, Fairness, and Teamwork, and has publicly committed herself to transparency, collaboration, and accountability; yet her handling of key incidents, lack of consistent communication with staff, non-attendance at certain leadership meetings and scheduled training sessions held within the Justice Center—at times when she was known to be present in her office—and her overall approach to organizational issues have consistently contradicted those stated values, creating a widening gap between the expectations she sets for the agency and the conduct demonstrated in her role as Sheriff;

Whereas, there is now an overwhelming lack of trust among deputies toward the Sheriff's leadership, motives, and communication. Many members feel that engaging directly with the Sheriff risks misrepresentation, selective interpretation, or unintended consequences. This absence of trust has significantly impaired effective communication between leadership and line staff and has undermined unity within the agency;

Whereas, this action is not intended to set a precedent for how the Association will respond to future disagreements or challenges with any administration. Rather, it reflects the membership's collective determination that the totality of the circumstances outlined above warranted this measure, and that this decision was reached only after considerable thought, discussion, and concern for the health of the agency, its personnel, and the community it serves;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Door County Deputy Sheriffs' Association, by majority vote of its membership, issues this formal Vote of No Confidence in Sheriff Tammy Sternard's leadership.

It is the intent of this resolution to formally communicate to the Sheriff, the County Administration, and the public that the members of this Association have lost faith in the Sheriff's ability to effectively lead this agency in a manner consistent with the best interests of its personnel and the citizens of Door County.

Respectfully submitted,

On behalf of the membership of the Door County Deputy Sheriffs' Association,

Chris Neuville, President
Bryan Geisel, Vice President
Matt Tassoul, Treasurer