

BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA ETHICS COMMISSION

In Re:

MATTHEW "SCOTTY" ADAMS,

COMPLAINT NO. VCRB 2024-05

**Former Chief Deputy, Brooke County
Sheriff's Department, Respondent**

STATEMENT OF CHARGES

The Probable Cause Review Board of the West Virginia Ethics Commission entered an Order on April 16, 2025, finding that there is probable cause to believe that Matthew "Scotty" Adams, the Respondent in the above-referenced Complaint, violated the following provision in the Ethics Act when he used Brooke County public resources, including equipment, supplies, vehicles, employee time, and liability insurance, for the private gain of his spouse and the Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b)(1) provides:

A public official or public employee may not knowingly and intentionally use his or her office or the prestige of his or her office for his or her own private gain or that of another person. Incidental use of equipment or resources available to a public official or public employee by virtue of his or her position for personal or business purposes resulting in de minimis private gain does not constitute use of public office for private gain under this subsection. The performance of usual and customary duties associated with the office or position or the advancement of public policy goals or constituent services, without compensation, does not constitute the use of prestige of office for private gain.

W. Va. Code R. § 158-6-5 provides:

5.1. Removal - Public officials and public employees shall not remove government property from the work-place for their private benefit.

5.2. Improper Use - Public officials and public employees shall not use government property for personal projects or activities that result in private gain.

5.3 This subsection does not apply to the de minimis use of government property.

The Order directed that this Statement of Charges be prepared and that the matter be scheduled for a public hearing to determine the truth or falsity of the charges.

Jurisdiction

1. Matthew "Scotty" Adams, ("Respondent" or "Adams") was the Chief Deputy of the Brooke County Sheriff's Department at all times pertinent herein.

2. Adams was a "public official" as defined in the Ethics Act, at W. Va. Code § 6B-1-3(k).

3. The Ethics Commission has jurisdiction over alleged violations of the West Virginia Ethics Act committed by public employees or officials, such as Adams. W. Va. Code §§ 6B-1-1 through 6B-3-11.

Facts

4. Adams served in law enforcement for approximately thirty years, serving as Chief Deputy Sheriff of Brooke County during calendar years 2021, 2022, and 2023.

5. Angel Adams, spouse of Respondent, is the pastor of a religious organization known as the New Day Christian Center. Annually, an event is held in Brooke County known as the Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The New Day Christian Center and other local organizations host the event.

6. The Respondent supervised the Wellsburg Junior Police Academy with the assistance of Brooke County deputy sheriffs.

7. The Brooke County Sheriff's Department's weapons and ammunition were used in the firearms training of participants at the Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

8. Richard Beatty, Sheriff of Brooke County, did not authorize the use of the Sheriff's Department's weapons and ammunition that were used in the training nor did he authorize the payment of overtime to deputies to assist at the event.

9. Property of the Brooke County Board of Education was utilized as a venue for a portion of the Wellsburg Junior Police Academy in 2021, 2022, and 2023. The Board of Education requires sponsors of such events held on its property to provide documentation indicating a rider with liability insurance covering the event. Neither the Sheriff of Brooke County nor the Brooke County Commission authorized use of County liability insurance to cover the Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

10. The Brooke County Sheriff's Department paid \$1,108.97 in overtime to deputies for assisting at the 2021 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The participants at the 2021 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy used ammunition belonging to the Brooke County Sheriff's Department worth \$273.20.

11. Adams provided a document purporting to demonstrate that the 2021 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy was covered by the liability insurance of Brooke County.

12. The Brooke County Sheriff's Department paid \$1,747.68 in overtime to deputies for assisting at the 2022 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The participants at the 2022 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy used ammunition belonging to the Brooke County Sheriff's Department worth \$273.20.

13. Adams provided a document purporting to demonstrate that the 2022 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy was covered by the liability insurance of Brooke County.

14. The Brooke County Sheriff's Department paid \$3,563.63 in overtime to deputies for assisting at the 2023 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The participants at the 2023 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy used ammunition belonging to the Brooke County Sheriff's Department worth \$273.20.

15. The Respondent denies use of weapons or ammunition belonging to the sheriff's department at the Wellsburg Junior Police Academy, asserts that the sheriff rather than Respondent would have approved the deputy sheriffs' attendance at the Wellsburg Junior Police Academy on work time, and asserts that the New Day Christian Center has liability insurance that was used for the Wellsburg Junior Police Academy rather than the liability insurance of Brooke County.

Count One

Unauthorized use of Brooke County Sheriff's Department weapons and ammunition at the 2021 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

16. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 15 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.

17. In 2021, Adams violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) by utilizing ammunition and weapons belonging to the Brooke County Sheriff's Department at the 2021 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The Respondent's act constituted the use of public office for the private gain of his spouse.

Count Two

Unauthorized use of overtime of Brooke County Deputy Sheriffs at the 2021 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

18. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 15 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.

19. In 2021, Adams violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) by directing or permitting Brooke County Deputy Sheriffs to work and be paid for overtime for assisting at the 2021 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The Respondent's act constituted the use of public office for the private gain of his spouse.

Count Three

Unauthorized use of Brooke County Sheriff's Department/Brooke County Commission liability insurance for the 2021 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

20. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 15 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.

21. In 2021, Adams violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) by the unauthorized use of documentation purporting to indicate coverage of the 2021 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy under liability insurance of the Brooke County Sheriff's Department and/or the Brooke County Commission when in fact neither the Sheriff's Department nor the Brooke County Commission had authorized said insurance coverage. The Respondent's act constituted the use of public office for the private gain of his spouse.

Count Four

Unauthorized use of Brooke County Sheriff's Department weapons and ammunition at the 2022 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

22. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 15 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.

23. In 2022, Adams violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) by utilizing ammunition and weapons belonging to the Brooke County Sheriff's Department at the 2022 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The Respondent's act constituted the use of public office for the private gain of his spouse.

Count Five

Unauthorized use of overtime of Brooke County Deputy Sheriffs at the 2022 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

24. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 15 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.

25. In 2022, Adams violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) by directing or permitting Brooke County Deputy Sheriffs to work and be paid for overtime for assisting at the 2022 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The Respondent's act constituted the use of public office for the private gain of his spouse.

Count Six

Unauthorized use of Brooke County Sheriff's Department/Brooke County Commission liability insurance for the 2022 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

26. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 15 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.

27. In 2022, Adams violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) by the unauthorized use of documentation purporting to indicate coverage of the 2022 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy under liability insurance of the Brooke County Sheriff's Department and/or the Brooke County Commission when in fact neither the Sheriff's Department nor the Brooke County Commission had authorized said insurance coverage. The Respondent's act constituted the use of public office for the private gain of his spouse.

Count Seven

Unauthorized use of Brooke County Sheriff's Department weapons and ammunition at the 2023 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

28. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 15 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.

29. In 2023, Adams violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) by utilizing ammunition and weapons belonging to the Brooke County Sheriff's Department at the 2023 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The Respondent's act constituted the use of public office for the private gain of his spouse.

Count Eight

Unauthorized use of overtime of Brooke County Deputy Sheriffs at the 2023 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy.

30. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 15 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.

31. In 2023, Adams violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) by directing or permitting Brooke County Deputy Sheriffs to work and be paid for overtime for assisting at the 2023 Wellsburg Junior Police Academy. The Respondent's act constituted the use of public office for the private gain of his spouse.

Dated: April 22, 2025



Kimberly B. Weber
Executive Director