



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
COLLIN COUNTY, TEXAS

JIM SKINNER, SHERIFF

From: Sheriff Jim Skinner JOS
To: Commissioners Court
Date: March 29, 2023
Re: Requesting Approval of Salary for Lateral Hire Thomas Peterson

Commissioners: I am seeking the blessing of the Collin County Commissioners Court to hire Thomas Peterson as a deputy sheriff with the salary of \$85,000/year (or \$6,590.00 above midpoint 556 of \$78,410), in light of his vast specialized training, qualifications and experience, and because of the desperate need of our organization to place such a qualified person as an investigator in our Child Exploitation Unit. Peterson is one of the most experienced experts in Texas regarding child exploitation and human trafficking investigations with over 25 years' of practical field service as a law enforcement officer. With the growing needs of the Child Exploitation Unit and the Child Advocacy Center, Peterson's experience is invaluable to the mission of the Collin County Sheriff's Office and the needs of our children in Collin County. Most notably, recent experiences have demonstrated how critical it is to have a CEU qualified deputy with the depth of expertise and experience necessary to make complex and difficult strategy and operational decisions required to successfully bring these types of cases to trial. This work is so specialized, it's not practical to try and train a field deputy with no specialized experience to serve in this role, unless they are constantly supervised. The work is so technical and complex, mistakes are easily made at any juncture, this requiring constant supervision. This is not the case with Peterson. Thomas Peterson possesses the type of experience where he can be plug-and-played, with little supervision from day one, on even the most difficult child exploitation investigations.

Currently employed with the Office of the Texas Attorney General, Peterson has over six years of experience working to combat child crimes, human trafficking, and organized crime investigations across the State of Texas. Previous to employment with the Texas AG, Peterson worked for the Dallas Police Department for over 19 years. While with the Dallas PD, he worked with Homeland Security Investigations on a human trafficking task force. He possesses a Master's Degree from Arizona State University and holds a master peace officer's certificate. His annual compensation is currently \$84,015.00.

HR advises they are prohibited from authorizing any salary over \$78,410 (556 midpoint) without the permission of the Commissioners Court.

Explaining his background helps one to understand why we believe Thomas Peterson should be hired at a salary of \$85,000. Peterson has long cultivated relationships with federal, state

and local law enforcement agencies, as well as with non-government organizations (NGO's) in the area of human trafficking enforcement. His experience as a leader in the North Texas Trafficking Taskforce focused on "outside the box" approaches to investigations as he employed techniques in combating transnational organized crime in ways that resulted in convictions of criminals that traditional investigative techniques could not yield. These techniques included incorporating money laundering, conspiracy, racketeering and fraud investigations into human trafficking and related cyber-crimes. Peterson also has vast experience in the investigation of prostitution, gambling, burglary, white-collar crime, theft, organized crime, wire fraud, Title III (wiretap) and OCDETF investigations. His professional development includes:

- Analytic and Cognitive Interviewing, 11/2018
- Master Police Officer (Texas) – Rapid Rescue, 6/2015
- Active Shooter, 11/2014
- Dignitary Protection, 4/2013
- Professional Interviewing, 6/2006
- TCOLE Instructure School, 1/2005
- Federal Undercover Operatives School Class UCOS 001B, 5/2010
- Basic Financial Investigations Seminar, 7/2011
- Southwest Border Money Laundering Conference, 6/2011
- National Center of Missing and Exploited Children (64) Personal Commendations
- Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Lamar University and Master's Degree in Global and International Politics from Arizona State University.

Peterson's work history includes:

DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT

1998 – 2017

Detective – Northwest Patrol Division Deployment Unit

Conducts plain clothes surveillance of high crime drug and prostitution areas. Develops leads on suspect(s) in assigned areas for burglary, theft, and property crimes. Updates and maintains known offender and crime trends records.

- Made over 2,300 arrests as lead investigator.
- Assisted in 500 felony arrests after assignment to South Dallas Violent Crime Taskforce resulting in lower crime statistics in this South Dallas high crime area. He was awarded the Police Commendation Bar for this work.

Detective – Vice Division

- Assigned to the North Texas Human Trafficking taskforce house, and embedded with Homeland Security Investigations in Los Colinas, Texas.
- Led several joint federal, state and local law enforcement agencies' investigations into transnational organized crime cabals which resulted in numerous international felony arrests and convictions for crimes associated with human trafficking, money laundering and conspiracy.

- Responsible for Human Trafficking training for local, state, and federal agencies including non-government agencies in the North Texas Region.
- Worked with the High-Risk Victim Unit on several high-profile cases.
- Instructed human trafficking to in-service recruits and senior officers and outside agencies.

Peterson also worked as a patrolman in the Southeast Patrol Division earlier in his career with Dallas PD.

OFFICE OF THE TEXAS ATTORNEY GENERAL

2017 – PRESENT

Sergeant

Conducted hundreds of cybercrime investigations including Online Solicitation of a Minor and Possession of Child Pornography.

- Worked routinely with the National Center of Missing and Exploited Children.
- Member of the South Texas Internet Crimes against Children Task Force.
- Conducts Human Trafficking investigations throughout the State of Texas.
- Conducts investigations involving forced labor and sex trafficking of minors and adults.
- Works with police departments throughout the State of Texas as a lead Investigator or assisting agency with human trafficking investigation.
- Coordinated with DFPS Special Investigators throughout the State of Texas monitoring high risk juveniles and recovering six children being trafficked since January of 2022.

Thomas Peterson is a highly experienced investigator that brings with him an impeccable reputation to the Collin County Sheriff's Office for his years of exemplary police work. This helps to build and maintain our reputation as one of the most professional and well trained Sheriff's Offices in the United States. Peterson comes to us in a time when filling the open Child Exploitation Unit billet must be done with a person that has the professional credentials and pedigree that he possesses. It requires a high level of expertise and credibility to bring forward Child Exploitation criminal cases that not only instill confidence among state and federal prosecutors, but ensures that the very worst of the worst criminals...those who manipulate and rape children...are brought to justice. Thomas Peterson is such a man.

I trust you will see the wisdom in approving the lateral hiring of Thomas Peterson and pray your will authorize him the salary of \$85,000.

Thank you.