



## MANATEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT Notice of Disciplinary Action

**Today's Date:** January 23, 2024  
**Employee:** George McCorkle  
**Dept/Div:** Public Safety/Code Enforcement

**Employee ID:** M009979  
**Position Title:** Division Chief  
**Date of Hire:** 05/16/2022

**Dates/Times of Violations:** January 23, 2024; January 25, 2024

**Policy Violation(s)** Employees has violated the following Manatee County Government Personnel Policy, Rules, and Procedures Manual. Refer to Section XI.B. Grounds for Discipline or Discharge:

6. Insubordination including refusing to perform work when assigned, or to comply with written or verbal instructions of the supervisory force, including the use of abusive or threatening language or behavior directed toward a supervisor.

14. Discourteous, insulting, abusive, or inflammatory language or conduct toward any person, which disrupts the workplace or serves to offend any citizen, vendor, or other person with whom the employee comes into contact during the performance of duties.

22. Unlawful or improper conduct, either on or off the job, which would tend to affect the employee's relationship to his or her job, his or her fellow workers, or Manatee County's reputation or goodwill in the community.

58. Threatening, intimidating, coercing, or interfering with fellow employees, supervision or the public at any time, including the use of abusive, foul, or obscene language.

### **Description of Violation(s):**

**FACTS:** On January 22, 2024, you met with Director Jodie Fiske and HR Representative Scott Sharp. At the request of Director Fiske Scott joined the meeting due to comments that you had made to various people in the Public safety Department. Those comments included that you felt that Director Fiske was targeting you for disciplinary actions without cause. At the start of the meeting Director Fiske specifically brought up these comments and provided ample opportunity over the course of the 45-minute meeting to inquire what actions or statements had been made by her that led you to believe you were being targeted. The only example you gave was that while on your vacation you were told that Director Fiske asked your Lieutenant, Tom Wooten, what you did each day. Upon your return from vacation in November, Director Fiske engaged you in conversation and you specifically asked her about that inquiry. Both in November and again during the meeting on January 22, 2024, Director Fiske explained that the question was posed to ensure that operational questions were able to be asked of your Lieutenants when you were unavailable. Director Fiske also acknowledged that she in fact did not know what your daily calendar looked like, but that was not uncommon and did not reflect any perception of wrongdoing on your part. In November, and again in the January 22 meeting, you accepted and acknowledged this statement.

Director Fiske also made it a point during the meeting to state multiple times that all feedback on her performance as the director was welcomed. Good and bad, and it was assured multiple times that there would never be any sort of discipline or negativity for receiving negative feedback on her performance. This statement was also accepted and acknowledged by you.

During this meeting specific conduct was discussed, specifically unprofessional comments or interactions with your direct reports. There was no discipline issued and it appeared to be a productive meeting resulting in a mutual understanding of professional conduct as well as utilizing open lines of communication with Director Fiske.

It was specifically discussed in detail that complaining to your direct reports was unacceptable, and that it created a toxic workplace culture that would not be tolerated. This point was also reinforced by Scott Sharp who specifically stated that you needed to be mindful of what you said, how you said it and who you said it to. You agreed and acknowledged this statement.

There were multiple opportunities provided during this meeting with an open forum to address any and all concerns that you might have to ensure that you felt confident in your position, moreover, it was made abundantly clear that open and honest communication was welcomed in this department. At no time during the meeting did you discuss any concerns other than an assumption made on your part.

January 23, 2024, it was reported to Director Fiske from two of your lieutenants in Code Enforcement that your behavior immediately following the meeting on January 22, and today on January 23, was both unprofessional, disruptive and has resulted in your direct reports filing complaints of retaliation for perceived disclosures to the Director; specifically, regarding the comments she relayed in her meeting with you.

The unprofessional conduct includes being rude and abrupt when speaking to your officers, being dismissive of staff, being non-responsive to their attempts at in person communication and finally your shift in mood and attitude resulted in multiple officers in your division noticing your behavior prompting a disruption to the workplace.

It is expected that the chief of a division does not allow their personal feelings to interfere with their professionalism, moreover, conduct and interaction with direct reports was specifically addressed by Director Fiske and Scott Sharp, this behavior constitutes insubordination and failure to perform the outlined duty of a chief in public safety:

**Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with others**

January 25, 2024, Director Fiske was made aware of two more complaints emailed by Lieutenants Wooten and Sznik regarding continued and escalated unprofessional conduct displayed by you in both a public staff meeting and a private meeting with Lieutenant Wooten. During the staff meeting you were rude and combative with Lieutenant Sznik, as well as other officers in Code Enforcement, causing disruption in the staff meeting and demonstrating a direct violation of the directive given by Director Fiske to create a work environment of positivity and security.

Lieutenant Wooten stated in his complaint that you believed Lieutenant Sznik to be the one who brought forth the initial complaints of unprofessional conduct, specifically the action of complaining to your direct reports on actions of others in the department. This action constitutes insubordination, failure to follow a directive given to you by Director Fiske in the meeting on January 22, and the attached violations of county policies regarding targeting and retaliation in the workplace. The loss of confidence from your officers, specifically your leadership team, has created a toxic workplace culture and one in which the effectiveness of the division is called into question.

**IMPACT:** This behavior does not align with the Manatee County ACE philosophy and has created a lack of trust and confidence from your team as well as your leadership. The result of your chosen unprofessional conduct has resulted in the disruption to the operation of those on your team and is a violation of the attached county policies.

**SUGGESTIONS/DIRECTIONS:** Based upon your continued unprofessional conduct you are released from your position as Code Enforcement Chief with Manatee County Public Safety effective immediately.

**KNOWLEDGE:** This action will be filed your personnel file as dictated by the Personnel Policy, Rules and Procedures Manual or Collective Bargaining Agreement.

**Prior Warnings & Disciplinary Actions:**

Has this employee been warned or disciplined before about this type of violation?

Yes       No

If Yes, check all that apply:

- Written Warning
- Suspension
- Demotion
- Probation
- Other: In person coaching with Director and Human Resources

**Date(s):**

January 22, 2024 - an in-person meeting was held with Chief McCorkle, HR Scott Sharp and Director Fiske regarding professional communication, unprofessional communication and discussions with direct reports regarding the toxic workplace culture being reported from multiple divisions in public safety from those who would be considered subordinate to Chief McCorkle.

**Action to be Taken**

- Suspension
- Demotion
- Probation
- Termination
- This Notice of Disciplinary Action

Probation:      From:      To:  
 Suspension:    From:      To:  
 Demotion:      From:      To:  
 Termination:   Effective Date: January 25, 2024      Time:

**Issued by:**

**Supervisor Name:**  
**Supervisor Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**  
**Manager Name:**  
**Manager Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:**  
**Department Director Name:** Jodie Fiske  
**Department Director Signature:** *Jodie Fiske* **Date:** 01/25/2024

**Approved by:**

**Employee Relations Manager or Designee Name:** Zach Ribble  
**Human Resources Signature:** *Zach Ribble* **Date:** 01/25/2024

I acknowledge receipt of this Notice of Disciplinary Action and have been notified of the appeal process as described in the Personnel Policy, Rules and Procedures Manual for the appropriate disciplinary action. I understand this appeal process applies only to Regular employees.

Employee Signature: *George McCorkle*      Date: *01-26-24*  


*My signature is acknowledging receipt of this document. These allegations are highly exaggerated.*



Public Safety  
2101 47<sup>th</sup> Terrace E  
Bradenton, FL 34203  
Phone: (941) 749-3500  
[www.mymanatee.org](http://www.mymanatee.org)

January 26, 2024

George McCorkle



Re: Notice of Termination

Dear Mr. McCorkle:

This letter is to inform you that Manatee County Government, Public Safety Department is ending your employment in accordance with the Manatee County Personnel Policy, Rules, and Procedures Manual, Section XI.A.3.

Therefore, effective January 26, 2024, at 12:30 p.m., your employment with Manatee County Government has ended. Please contact Jennifer Morand at (941) 748-4501, ext. 3849 to make arrangements to submit your final time sheet, return County property, and obtain any personal items from the office.

Sincerely,

*Jodie Fiske*

Jodie Fiske  
Public Safety Director

*Kate Barnett*

Kate Barnett  
Interim Human Resources Director

Attachment –HR 189 Form

\_\_\_\_\_ Delivered by registered/certified mail# \_\_\_\_\_

CC: Sarah Warren, Assistant County Attorney  
Kate Barnett, Interim HR Director  
Zach Ribble, Employee Relations Manager