



DIVISION OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

KEN BURKE, CPA

Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller
Pinellas County, FL



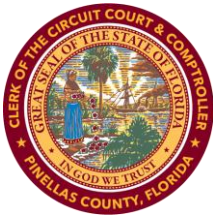
INVESTIGATION OF PUBLIC WORKS MISUSE OF TIME



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Inspector General/Chief Audit Executive

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REPORT NO. 2026-19
JUNE 30, 2026



KEN BURKE, CPA

Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller
Pinellas County, FL

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June 30, 2026

Kelli Hammer Levy, Director, Public Works Department

The Division of Inspector General's Public Integrity Unit has completed an investigation of the six allegations below. It is our practice to name Respondents in a report when one or more allegations have been substantiated.

Respondent

- Kameron Thomas-Gonzalez, Project Coordinator, Capital Improvements & Survey and Mapping Division, Public Works

Allegations

Based on documented evidence, facts, and other evidentiary information, such as testimony, we concluded as follows:

Secondary Employment

- Allegation 1. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator did not disclose their secondary employment prior to commencing their role with the County. We concluded the allegation was **substantiated**; there was sufficient evidence to conclude the allegation was true.
- Allegation 2. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator holds secondary employment that represents a conflict of interest with their role with the County. We concluded the allegation was **unfounded**; it was proved to be false, or there was no credible evidence to support it.

Remote Work

- Allegation 3. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator lives more than 60 miles from the County and did not request an appropriate remote work accommodation to do so. We concluded the allegation was **unfounded**; it was proved to be false, or there was no credible evidence to support it.
- Allegation 4. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator works from home on days they are not approved to do so. We concluded the allegation was **unfounded**; it was proved to be false, or there was no credible evidence to support it.

Kelli Hammer Levy, Director, Public Works Department
June 30, 2026

Time Management

- Allegation 5. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator does not work all hours they are scheduled. We concluded the allegation was **unfounded**; it was proved to be false, or there was no credible evidence to support it.

Work Conference

- Allegation 6. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator did not maximize a professional development opportunity due to missing scheduled activities. We concluded the allegation was **unfounded**; it was proved to be false, or there was no credible evidence to support it.

The recommendations presented in this report may not be all-inclusive of areas where improvement may be needed; however, we believe implementation of the recommendations will strengthen the current internal controls.

We appreciate the cooperation shown by the staff of Public Works during the course of this investigation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Dondero

Melissa Dondero
Inspector General/Chief Audit Executive

cc: The Honorable Chair and Members of the Board of County Commissioners
Barry Burton, County Administrator
Jill Silverboard, Deputy County Administrator/Chief of Staff
Ken Burke, Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

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ABBREVIATIONS

County	Pinellas County
HR	Pinellas County Human Resources
IG	Division of Inspector General
NEO	New Employee Orientation
PIU	Public Integrity Unit
PW	Public Works Department

INTRODUCTION

Predicate

Between October 7, 2025, and December 9, 2025, the Division of Inspector General's (IG) Public Integrity Unit (PIU) received three anonymous complaints about Kameron Thomas-Gonzalez (Respondent), a Project Coordinator in the Public Works Department's (PW) Capital Improvements & Survey and Mapping Division. The initial complaint, which the IG received on October 7, 2025, alleged that the Respondent was working from home for approximately two-and-a-half months, from July 31, 2025, through October 1, 2025.

On October 20, 2025, the IG received the second complaint. This complaint alleged the Respondent was working remotely for nearly three months. It also detailed that the Respondent occasionally, but rarely, reported to the office on Wednesdays. The complaint indicated that the Respondent lives approximately two hours away from the County and implied that the Respondent was including their commute time within their scheduled working hours. In addition, the complaint alleged that the Respondent frequently left the office before their scheduled end time and often displayed an "away" status on Microsoft Teams. Finally, this complaint alleged that the Respondent owned an engineering company for which he may have been doing work on County time.

On December 9, 2025, the IG received the third complaint. This complaint detailed the Respondent's attendance at an out-of-town conference that lasted three days. The complaint alleged that the Respondent did not attend the vast majority of the second or third day of the conference and that he departed prior to the conclusion of the activities.

Allegations

The IG's PIU investigated the following allegations:

Secondary Employment

- Allegation 1. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator did not disclose their secondary employment prior to commencing their role with the County.
- Allegation 2. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator holds secondary employment that represents a conflict of interest with their role with the County.

Remote Work

- Allegation 3. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator lives more than 60 miles from the County and did not request an appropriate remote work accommodation to do so.
- Allegation 4. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator works from home on days they are not approved to do so.

Time Management

- Allegation 5. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator does not work all hours they are scheduled.

Work Conference

- Allegation 6. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator did not maximize a professional development opportunity due to missing scheduled activities.

To determine whether the allegations were substantiated, we reviewed policies, procedures, and appropriate records. We also interviewed staff and other parties, as needed. Our investigation was conducted in compliance with the Quality Standards for Investigations found within the *Principles and Standards for Offices of Inspector General* as published by the Association of Inspectors General and *The Florida Inspectors General Standards Manual* from The Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation.

Background

PW manages environmental, stormwater, and transportation systems in the County, with the following divisions:

- Capital Improvements & Survey and Mapping
- Construction
- Customer & Technical Services
- Environmental Management
- Special Programs
- Stormwater Management
- Transportation

The Respondent is a Capital Improvements Project Coordinator within the Capital Improvements & Survey and Mapping Division. This role is responsible for the planning and implementation of capital projects through all stages, from preliminary through construction. The position combines administrative responsibilities with frequent on-site presence at construction projects. The Respondent has a supervisor, a Senior Project Manager; he is the supervisor's only direct report.

INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Division of Inspector General uses the following terminology for the conclusion of fact/findings:

- **Substantiated** – An allegation is substantiated when there is sufficient evidence to conclude the allegation is true.
- **Unsubstantiated** – An allegation is unsubstantiated when there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation.
- **Unfounded** – An allegation is unfounded when it is proved to be false or there is no credible evidence to support it.
- **Justified** – An allegation is justified when it is proved to be true. However, the actions were appropriate in the circumstances.

Secondary Employment Allegations

Allegation 1. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator did not disclose their secondary employment prior to commencing their role with the County.

Allegation 2. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator holds secondary employment that represents a conflict of interest with their role with the County.

The IG reviewed several County and departmental policies related to the disclosure of secondary employment, including the Unified Personnel Board Policy #5: Outside or Non-County Employment, which states:

"2. Request for Outside Employment: Prior to engaging in outside employment or other outside enterprise, an employee must obtain permission from his or her Appointing Authority by submitting a request to his or her Appointing Authority seeking approval for the outside employment or enterprise. Unless an Appointing Authority has adopted a different policy, such request should be made on the form available within OPUS for this purpose."

The Respondent began employment with the County on May 19, 2025. The IG confirmed that the Respondent reinstated his company with the Florida Division of Corporations on March 18, 2025. The Respondent received his offer of employment for his position with the County on April 25, 2025. The IG reviewed the Respondent's LinkedIn profile and noted the Respondent was advertising for services on his profile. This is a non-standard, user-enabled feature on LinkedIn.

During an interview with the IG, the Respondent stated that he did have a utilities consulting business with clients based out of Orlando, but had not had any clients since beginning employment with the County. The Respondent reported he did not think his outside employment represented a conflict of interest because it was not in the same field as his role with the County. The Respondent's role with the County is within public works and his private business is related to utilities consulting. In addition, he shared that he does not have clients based in Pinellas County.

The Respondent thought he reported his outside employment by filling out a form during New Employee Orientation (NEO). However, the County's Human Resources (HR) Department confirmed that employees are provided instructions during NEO on how to properly disclose secondary employment through their department; employees are not provided a mechanism for disclosure through NEO. IG staff confirmed the Respondent had no secondary employment on file with HR.

After the Respondent's interview with the IG, the Respondent reported to the IG that he informed his supervisor and his supervisor's superior about his business immediately after the interview.

During an interview with the Respondent's supervisor, the supervisor indicated the Respondent's secondary employment did not represent a conflict of interest as the Respondent's role with the County does not include work on utility-related projects.

We determined Allegation 1 was substantiated. We determined Allegation 2 was unfounded.

Remote Work Allegations

Allegation 3. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator lives more than 60 miles from the County and did not request an appropriate remote work accommodation to do so.

Allegation 4. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator works from home on days they are not approved to do so.

The County Administrator's Remote Work Policy states the following:

"Departments must receive approval from the County Administrator if they seek to hire a candidate that lives outside of a 60-mile radius from Pinellas County."

The IG confirmed that the Respondent's address in OPUS was located in Davenport, approximately 84 miles from his assigned County office in Clearwater. Given the County

Administrator's policy, the County Administrator would have had to approve the Respondent's hire.

During an interview with the IG, the Respondent stated that he relocated closer to the County prior to commencing employment. The Respondent notified IG staff that he updated his address in OPUS to reflect his updated residence immediately following the interview. IG staff verified that OPUS reflected the Respondent's updated address and that it meets the County's distance requirements.

The County Administrator's Remote Work Policy states that employees who are eligible for hybrid work schedules are required to complete a remote working arrangement form, which must be uploaded into the Workforce Relations SharePoint site. This form, signed by the Respondent, his supervisor, and the Division Director, states the following:

"Employees are expected to adhere to this schedule unless exceptions or changes are approved in advance of and in writing by their supervisor."

In order to determine if the Respondent was working in the office as expected, IG staff analyzed the following:

- Badge system records
- Timecard data
- Testimony from the Subject Matter Expert for the Badge Reader System for the Respondent's office building
- Testimony and evidence from the Respondent's Supervisor
- Testimony from the Respondent's Supervisor's Superior
- Testimony from the Respondent

Analysis of the badge system records, timecard data, and testimony from the subject matter expert responsible for the badge reader system identified discrepancies concerning the days the Respondent was expected to report to the office. The approved remote working arrangement form indicated that any amendments to the approved hybrid schedule must occur in writing. Through interviews with the Respondent and his supervisor, IG staff learned that they always communicated about schedule changes. However, these communications were not always in writing.

The Respondent's supervisor was consistently aware of his whereabouts, and although the official written policy was not always followed, the Respondent's actions were permissible.

We determined Allegation 3 was unfounded. We determined Allegation 4 was unfounded.

Time Management Allegation

Allegation 5. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator does not work all hours they are scheduled.

In order to determine if the Respondent was working as expected, IG staff analyzed the following:

- Badge system records
- Timecard data
- Testimony and evidence from the Respondent's Supervisor
- Testimony from the Respondent

Analysis of the badge system records and timecard data identified discrepancies regarding the Respondent's in-office presence. The Respondent had a documented work schedule; however, during his interview with the IG, the Respondent stated that he does not strictly adhere to his schedule because he is responsive to contractors and other parties after his working hours end. The Respondent indicated that he believes he works over 40 hours per week most of the time. Since the Respondent's position is exempt, he does not qualify for overtime pay.

The Respondent's supervisor provided additional context that resolved the discrepancies identified in the above analysis. The Respondent's supervisor had no concerns about the Respondent's productivity and indicated that if the Respondent was not working as expected, it would be readily apparent within the Respondent's assigned projects.

We determined Allegation 5 was unfounded.

Work Conference Allegation

Allegation 6. A Public Works Capital Improvements Project Coordinator did not maximize a professional development opportunity due to missing scheduled activities.

The Respondent had the opportunity to attend the Florida Stormwater Association Winter Conference, which took place in Orlando, FL, from December 3, 2025, through December 5, 2025. The conference consisted of an optional half-day tour or lecture on day 1, a full day of lectures on day 2, and a half-day of lectures on day 3. The Respondent registered for all three days of the conference.

The IG interviewed three conference attendees. None of the attendees noted anything of interest related to the Respondent. Two of the attendees specifically recalled seeing the Respondent during conference activities.

The Respondent indicated in his interview that he attended the conference in its entirety. The Respondent provided IG staff with several text messages from the conference dates that showed his correspondence with other County attendees.

The IG reviewed the available information and found no credible evidence to support the allegation.

We determined Allegation 6 was unfounded.

INVESTIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of our investigative work above, we have the following recommendations for management.

We Recommend Management:

- A. Develop a standard for evaluating the 60-mile requirement upon hire for remote-eligible positions.
- B. Refresh employees on requirements regarding changes to approved remote work schedules.

Management Response and Action Plan:

- A. **Management Concurs.** The 60-mile requirement is policy that applies to all BCC Departments, so Public Works is not the only department impacted. In response, Public Works contacted Human Resources who worked with Workforce Relations to develop a process for the near term. Their recommendation is the following:
 - 1. Recruitment Initiation Form - Add question concerning remote work eligibility.
 - 2. If Remote Eligible - Adding a supplementary question in the application regarding the 60-mile requirement and ability to meet that requirement.
 - 3. Including 60- mile requirement in the offer letter template.
 - 4. Confirm address as part of the onboarding process.

The policy has also been shared with the new ERP implementation team to determine whether future system functionality can support it. The ERP serves as the system of record for onboarding new employees, including the entry of their home address.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Near Term - Judith Peterson, Recruitment Manager and Danielle Holland, HRIS supervisor. Long Term - ERP Implementation Team
- ✓ **Planned Implementation Completion Date:** Near Term - July 1, 2026. Long Term - July 1, 2027

- B. **Management Concurs.** Proposed updates to the policy were shared and discussed at the December 17, 2025, Departmental Staff Meeting. To improve upon this, remote eligible employees will receive specific information related to remote schedules and flex time at the departmental new employee orientation. The topic will also be discussed at the July 2026 staff meeting, and an overview will be incorporated into the staff meeting summary that all employees receive.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Jim Valliere, Public Works
Human Resources Coordinator
- ✓ **/Planned Implementation Completion Date:** July 30, 2026



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