



# DIVISION OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

KEN BURKE, CPA

Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller

Pinellas County, FL



## INVESTIGATION OF PUBLIC WORKS OVERTIME



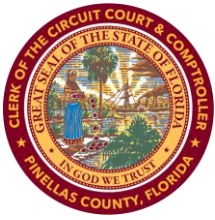
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**REPORT NO. 2026-12**  
**APRIL 30, 2026**



## KEN BURKE, CPA

Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller  
Pinellas County, FL

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April 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 related to two Respondents. It is our practice to name Respondents in a report when one or more allegations have been substantiated.

### **Respondents**

- Respondent 1: Robert Jones, Operations Manager, Stormwater Management Division, Public Works
- Respondent 2: Joseph Lawton, former Section Manager, Stormwater Management Division, Public Works

### **Allegations**

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

#### Overtime

- Allegation 1. Respondent 1 worked excessive overtime without proper authorization. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the allegation is true. **Substantiated.**
- Allegation 2. Respondent 2 approved Respondent 1's overtime without proper authorization. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the allegation is true. **Substantiated.**

#### GPS Device

- Allegation 3. Respondent 1 tampered with the GPS device attached to their County vehicle. There was insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. **Unsubstantiated.**

#### Remote Work

- Allegation 4. Respondent 1 violated the Pinellas County Administrator Remote Work Policy. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the allegation is true. **Substantiated.**
- Allegation 5. Respondent 2 improperly authorized Respondent 1 to work remotely. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the allegation is true. **Substantiated.**

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

### Outside Employment

- Allegation 6. Respondent 1 engaged in outside employment without proper approval. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the allegation is false. **Unfounded.**

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  
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

BTS	Business Technology Services
Clerk	Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
County	Pinellas County
EAM	Enterprise Asset Management
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FO	Fleet Operations
GPS	Global Positioning System
HR	Human Resources Department
IG	Division of Inspector General
Jones	Robert Jones, Operations Manager, Stormwater Management Division, Public Works (Respondent 1)
Lawton	Joseph Lawton, former Section Manager, Stormwater Management Division, Public Works (Respondent 2)
OT	Overtime
Payroll	Clerk's Finance Payroll Department
PIU	Public Integrity Unit
PW	Public Works
Rule 3	Rule 3. Compensation
SO	Stormwater Operations
UPB 5	Unified Personnel Board Policy #5 Outside or Non-County Employment

# INTRODUCTION

## Predicate

On May 22, 2025, the Division of Inspector General's (IG) Public Integrity Unit (PIU) received an anonymous complaint that an Operations Manager within Public Works' (PW) Stormwater Management Division (Jones or Respondent 1) was accruing excessive overtime and potentially not working during work time. The Complainant stated they were aware that Stormwater Operations (SO) employees worked overtime related to the hurricanes in 2024; however, a review of Spending in the Sunshine information revealed Jones had worked between 400 and 500 hours of overtime from the beginning of 2025, to the time of the complaint in May 2025. The Complainant thought management may be aware of the overtime but wanted to report it in case they were not.

The IG obtained payroll records for Jones from January 1, 2025, to May 17, 2025, from the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller's (Clerk) Finance Payroll Department (Payroll). Jones was paid for 472 hours of overtime during the period reviewed, which equated to an average of 24.1 hours of overtime per week. We interviewed the PW Director to determine if the overtime was appropriate. The PW Director was unaware of the overtime and did not approve it.

The IG noted the overtime was approved by Jones' supervisor, Joseph Lawton, a Stormwater Management Division Section Manager (Lawton or Respondent 2). Therefore, the IG opened an investigation into Jones' overtime and Lawton's approval of the overtime.

The Complainant also alleged that Jones' work vehicle did not have a global positioning system (GPS) installed. The IG review of GPS activity for the vehicle assigned to Jones indicated a GPS device was installed, and there were no fraud indicators. Therefore, the IG did not include this allegation in the investigation.

When the IG opened the investigation into the overtime, the PW Director immediately informed Lawton that all overtime for PW must be submitted and approved by the PW Director. During the investigation, the IG obtained additional information that resulted in four additional allegations against Jones and Lawton.

## Allegations

The IG's PIU investigated the following allegations:

### Overtime

- Allegation 1. Respondent 1 worked excessive overtime without proper authorization. There was sufficient evidence to conclude the allegation is true. **Substantiated.**

- Allegation 2. Respondent 2 approved Respondent 1's overtime without proper authorization. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the allegation is true. **Substantiated.**

#### GPS Device

- Allegation 3. Respondent 1 tampered with the GPS device attached to their work vehicle. There was insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. **Unsubstantiated.**

#### Remote Work

- Allegation 4. Respondent 1 violated the Pinellas County (County) Administrator Remote Work Policy. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the allegation is true. **Substantiated.**
- Allegation 5. Respondent 2 improperly authorized Respondent 1 to work remotely. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the allegation is true. **Substantiated.**

#### Outside Employment

- Allegation 6. Respondent 1 engaged in outside employment without proper approval. There was sufficient evidence to conclude that the allegation is false. **Unfounded.**

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**

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

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

Within the Stormwater Management Division, PW manages Stormwater Operations (SO), Mosquito Control & Vegetation Management, Stormwater Planning & Engineering, Urban Forestry, and Landscape Services. Jones and Lawton worked in SO, with Jones serving as

Operations Manager of Permitted Facilities and Below Ground Maintenance. Prior to Lawton terminating employment with the County, Lawton served as a Section Manager.

Along with Jones, there is one other Operations Manager in SO. Operations managers' responsibilities include assigning work orders to crew chiefs, performing quality control assessments, and closing work orders in Cityworks, the County's Enterprise Asset Management System. SO operations managers are also responsible for working in the field monitoring crews conducting fieldwork, overseeing disciplinary action for employees, ensuring employees have proper equipment, and reviewing citizen complaints.

# 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.

## Overtime Allegations

**Allegation 1. Respondent 1 worked excessive overtime without proper authorization.**

**Allegation 2. Respondent 2 approved overtime without proper authorization.**

The IG reviewed the County's Personnel Rule 3. Compensation (Rule 3) which states:

*"i. Overtime: It shall be the general practice of the County to not have its employees work frequent or considerable overtime. However, Appointing Authorities may authorize or direct an employee to work overtime when necessary in order to meet emergency situations or operating needs."*

The County uses three classifications for employees: classified, classified/excluded, and exempt. Jones position is classified/excluded. Rule 3 states the following regarding classified/excluded employees:

*"d) Salaried Classified Service employees, those certified by the Appointing Authority through the County Attorney to the Chief Human Resources Officer as excluded from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act ("Classified Excluded"), will be compensated at time and one half for any hours worked over 80 in a pay period if approved by the Appointing Authority."*

As noted above, the appointing authority is required to approve overtime for classified/excluded employees; however, this responsibility could have been delegated to the department.

The County's Human Resources Department (HR) provides guidance on overtime and compensatory time, as follows:

*"If a classified/excluded employee decides to work more than 80 hours in a pay period on their own initiative without being directed to do so, then the time does not count as hours worked and the employee is not eligible for overtime pay."*

We confirmed with HR that classified/excluded employees are not subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act for overtime, and in that regard, are treated as salaried employees. The County chooses to pay these employees for overtime when authorized.

During the investigation, the IG reviewed Jones' payroll records from August 25, 2024, to October 4, 2025, including Hours Detail Reports and Timecard Audit Trail Reports. The Hours Detail Reports show all hours paid to Jones by type, such as regular time, overtime, and annual leave. The Timecard Audit Trail Reports show when time is entered, who entered the data, and who approved the data. The IG reviewed the reports and observed the following:

- From August 25, 2024, to October 4, 2025, Jones worked a total of 1,089 overtime hours, or an average of 16.7 overtime hours per week.
- Between January 1, 2025, and June 28, 2025, Jones worked a total of 626 overtime hours, or an average of 24.2 hours per week.
- From August 25, 2024, to October 4, 2025, Jones worked 112 of 174 days that he would normally be off work (64%).
- For 9 payroll periods, Jones had time coded for all 14 days in the period.
- For 6 payroll periods, Jones had time coded for 13 days in the time period.
- Between May 18, 2025, and July 03, 2025, Jones' timecard showed he worked all 47 days except for Juneteenth, which is a recognized County holiday.
- Jones submitted time for 78 days prior to time being worked.
- Jones' supervisor, Lawton, approved timecards that included overtime before the employee worked the overtime.

During an interview with the IG, the PW Director indicated that PW had significantly less overtime for the two prior years since the implementation of rotating shifts. After this implementation, the department's overtime was reduced to special projects only. However, even though the PW Director did not approve Jones' overtime directly, the 2024 hurricanes may have been a reason for the overtime. If the overtime was a result of the hurricanes, the employee's timecard should have included a project code so the cost could be routed for possible reimbursement through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The IG obtained Project Costing Reports for Jones from September 1, 2024, to September 20, 2025. The Project Costing Reports provided a breakdown of all payroll periods for the time period, indicating if the costs associated with Jones' time had been transferred to a

specific project. Out of the 29 payroll periods reviewed, 6 had costs associated with projects. All 6 pay periods were in 2024; Jones did not have any time assigned to projects in 2025.

The IG interviewed Lawton to determine whether Jones' overtime was appropriate. Lawton reported that SO had a backlog of work orders since the County completed a reduction-in-force in 2009. Lawton also stated that the SO work order backlog grew after the 2024 hurricanes and that SO could not complete the workload within a normal 40-hour workweek.

Lawton explained that the process for approving overtime was for him to submit the list to his division director, who would approve or deny the request. In December 2024, the division director left employment with the County, and Lawton stopped seeking additional overtime approvals.

During the interview, Lawton stated Jones' standard schedule was 10 hours per day, Monday through Thursday.

The IG reviewed PWADM-92-12, PW's Work Schedule Policy, which states:

*"ii. 4-day Schedule:*

*1. The expected workday for those approved to work a 4-day schedule will be 10 hours plus a lunch period....*

*iv. On weeks that have a scheduled holiday, the work schedule may require adjustment to ensure the total hours in the week do not result in overtime as a direct result of the holiday pay.*

*v. Schedules will need to be adjusted to accommodate required meetings, in person meetings, staff meetings, training, vacations, and travel.*

*vi. Employees on an alternate schedule may occasionally work flexible schedules with days greater than their normal work hours on a case-by-case basis with Division Director approval.*

*Division Directors may approve temporary deviations from an employee's approved work schedule from time-to-time (e.g., holiday weeks)."*

During the IG's interview with Jones, Jones stated SO had a backlog of work orders, which resulted in the need for overtime. Jones explained that overtime work is a continuation of the same type of work performed on any other day.

The IG attempted to verify if Jones worked on all days reported on his time cards from August 25, 2024, to October 4, 2025 (337 days):

- August 25, 2024 - December 31, 2024: 118 days
- January 1, 2025 - October 4, 2025: 219 days

The only data available to verify work performed for 2024 was from Cityworks. We obtained Cityworks activity logs from the County's Business Technology Services (BTS) and noted that out of 118 days with time recorded, the Cityworks activity log showed 47 days (40%) with activity.

For the period of January 1, 2025, through October 4, 2025, Jones had time recorded on his time cards for 219 days. The IG reviewed building access records for Jones, which would show when Jones used his County identification badge to enter County buildings, and noted Jones used his badge to enter County buildings on 181 days, leaving 38 days with no badge use.

The IG obtained the following computer access logs from BTS for Jones for January 1, 2025, through October 4, 2025:

- Active Directory Logs (Records of a user's access to the County network, either local or remote)
- Microsoft Office 365 Log (Record of a user's activity using Microsoft Office 365)
- OKTA Logs (Record of a user's access to the County's multi-factor authenticator)

Of the 38 days in 2025 with no badge activity, the BTS activity logs showed activity on 30 days, leaving 8 days with no activity.

During an interview with the PW Director, the PW Director explained that while SO had approximately 1,500 open work orders at the time of the interview, the number is not representative of the work to be completed. The PW Director stated the work management team had met with Lawton to review the work order list with him, as several of the work orders were duplicative or outdated. An exhaustive review of the work order list would be required to ensure it accurately reflected the current workload.

PW uses Cityworks labor reports to determine available labor hours and assist with project planning. The PW Director showed the IG a labor report that showed that SO had not reached its planned hours, and the PW Director was unable to justify the need for overtime. Moreover, the PW Director did not approve the overtime.

**We determined Allegations 1 and 2 were substantiated.**

### **GPS Device Allegation**

**Allegation 3. Respondent 1 tampered with the GPS device attached to their County vehicle.**

As mentioned above, during the IG's preliminary review of the allegations, a review of the GPS activity for the vehicle assigned to Jones, vehicle LT119316, indicated that a GPS device was installed and that there were no fraud indicators; however, during the investigation, the IG learned that Jones was assigned two County vehicles during the IG's

review period. Therefore, during the investigation, the IG expanded its review to include GPS activity for the additional County vehicle assigned to Jones, vehicle LT126809.

Since the GPS report for LT119316 showed no activity after April 23, 2025, the IG generated a GPS activity report for March - June 2025 for LT126809, and noted GPS was not properly recording the vehicle's movements. Figure 1 below shows the details recorded for LT126809 on April 30, 2025, and May 1, 2025. On each of these days, the vehicle traveled 82.7 miles between Orlando and Clearwater; however, the GPS did not capture the details of the trip.

<b>Detailed Activity Report for Pinellas County</b>									
Dates: 3/1/2025 to 6/1/2025									
Mobile: LT126809, Shift: 12:00 AM to 12:00 AM									
Flags Legend G: GPS P: Ping S: Speeding O: Old									
<b>4/30/2025 12:00 AM to 5/1/2025 12:00 AM</b>									
9:19:09 AM EDT	-	Unknown	Orlando	FL	32819	82.7	0	S (194°)	G-----
<b>Totals for 4/30/2025 12:00 AM to</b>						<b>82.7</b>			
<b>5/1/2025 12:00 AM to 5/2/2025 12:00 AM</b>									
9:19:05 AM EDT	-	Unknown	Clearwater	FL	33765	82.7	0	N (0°)	G-----
<b>Totals for 5/1/2025 12:00 AM to 5/2/2025</b>						<b>82.7</b>			

Figure 1 GPS Activity LT126809 March - June 2025

The IG consulted with the Fleet Operations (FO) Manager to determine the cause of the GPS reports recording limited activity. FO coordinated with PW to obtain and inspect vehicle LT126809. After inspecting the vehicle, the FO Manager informed the IG and PW that the vehicle's GPS could not be located. The FO Manager also sent the IG a GPS Tamper Report for LT126809, indicating that the GPS had been disconnected from the power supply on two separate dates: May 9, 2025, and June 17, 2025.

For comparison purposes, Figure 2 below shows the GPS activity report for vehicle LT119316, with properly recorded movement, as illustrated for January 18, 2025, with 34 data points for a total of 12.9 miles traveled for vehicle LT119316.

**Detailed Activity Report for Pinellas County**

Dates: 1/1/2025 to 3/31/2025

Driver: Rob Jones, Shift: 12:00 AM to 12:00 AM

Flags Legend G: GPS P: Ping S: Speeding

1/18/2025 12:00 AM to 1/19/2025 12:00 AM							
8:47:30 AM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.974316	-82.727968	0.0	0	N (0°) G-----
1:40:48 PM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.974316	-82.727968	0.0	0	N (0°) ---- -
1:41:17 PM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.974482	-82.728862	0.1	12	W (275°) G-M-I-
1:42:18 PM EST	LT119316	Access Rd	27.972155	-82.728834	0.2	19	S (177°) G-M-I-
1:43:18 PM EST	LT119316	Access Rd	27.968141	-82.727859	0.3	0	S (181°) G-M-I-
1:44:18 PM EST	LT119316	Access Rd	27.968125	-82.727854	0.0	0	S (181°) G-M-I-
1:45:18 PM EST	LT119316	2893 Drew St	27.967884	-82.725792	0.1	30	E (91°) G-M-I-
1:46:18 PM EST	LT119316	2721 Drew St	27.967845	-82.724761	0.1	0	E (95°) G-M-I-
1:47:18 PM EST	LT119316	2945 Drew St	27.967875	-82.715884	0.5	35	E (90°) G-M-I-
1:48:18 PM EST	LT119316	3091 Drew St	27.967849	-82.709252	0.4	0	E (88°) G-M-I-
1:49:18 PM EST	LT119316	S Momullen Booth Rd	27.964160	-82.708995	0.3	41	S (180°) G-M-I-
1:50:18 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.963987	-82.707863	0.7	40	S (186°) G-M-I-
1:51:18 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.944185	-82.704785	0.7	43	S (165°) G-M-I-
1:52:18 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.933900	-82.701721	0.7	39	S (165°) G-M-I-
1:53:18 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.923737	-82.698739	0.7	41	S (166°) G-M-I-
1:54:18 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.913964	-82.700404	0.7	41	S (188°) G-M-I-
1:55:18 PM EST	LT119316	14536 49th St N	27.904353	-82.700804	0.7	39	S (179°) G-M-I-
1:56:19 PM EST	LT119316	14375 49th St N	27.902626	-82.700455	0.3	14	N (358°) G-M-I-
1:57:19 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.911640	-82.700646	0.6	42	N (8°) G-M-I-
1:58:19 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.922922	-82.698321	0.8	47	N (351°) G-M-I-
1:59:19 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.934821	-82.701780	0.9	50	N (345°) G-M-I-
2:00:19 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.947001	-82.705366	0.9	48	N (345°) G-M-I-
2:01:19 PM EST	LT119316	49th St N	27.958182	-82.708822	0.8	42	N (349°) G-M-I-
2:02:19 PM EST	LT119316	117 N Momullen Booth Rd	27.967617	-82.708877	0.7	8	N (0°) G-M-I-
2:03:19 PM EST	LT119316	3018 Drew St	27.968042	-82.712117	0.2	34	W (271°) G-M-I-
2:04:19 PM EST	LT119316	2780 Drew St	27.968025	-82.722139	0.6	32	W (270°) G-M-I-
2:05:19 PM EST	LT119316	Access Rd	27.969219	-82.727806	0.5	31	N (0°) G-M-I-
2:06:19 PM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.973407	-82.728199	0.3	8	NE (33°) G-M-I-
2:07:19 PM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.973636	-82.727702	0.0	0	SE (157°) G-M-I-
2:08:19 PM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.974304	-82.727977	0.1	0	NE (38°) G-M-I-
2:09:19 PM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.974315	-82.727965	0.0	0	NE (38°) G-M-I-
2:10:19 PM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.974312	-82.727966	0.0	0	NE (38°) G-M-I-
2:11:00 PM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.974315	-82.727972	0.0	0	NE (38°) G--- -
2:11:49 PM EST	LT119316	Unknown	27.974314	-82.727983	0.0	0	NE (38°) G-----
<b>Totals for 1/18/2025 12:00 AM to</b>					<b>12.9</b>		

Figure 2 GPS Activity for LT119316 January - March 2025

The IG obtained and reviewed Pinellas County Administrative Directive 7-5 Vehicle Telematics Standard, which states the following:

**"PURPOSE:**

*The County seeks to realize the following business benefits from a vehicle telematics/GPS application:*

- *Identify situations when an operator is in danger or in need of emergency assistance.*
- *Identify accidents and emergency conditions immediately and independent of operator reporting.*
- *Identify operating faults generated or captured by vehicle and equipment electronic control units.*
- *Capture vehicle and equipment faults remotely under actual operating conditions.*
- *Provide the ability to establish the exact location of any County rolling stock or equipment unit at any time.*

- *Locate stolen or misappropriated equipment.*
- *Identify travel patterns to optimize route planning, facility siting, and equipment staging decisions.*
- *Improve rolling stock and equipment selection and upfitting decisions.*
- *Document vehicle and equipment operating location and conditions as captured by vehicle onboard systems and accessory equipment.*
- *Evaluate reports of improper operation or imprudent utilization.*
- *Document equipment location and operating hours for FEMA reimbursement.*
- *Enforce Administrative Directive 7-3, Vehicle and Equipment Idling.*
- *Identify need for operator training and other appropriate interventions.*

*Comments:*

*Collection and analysis of rolling stock and equipment operating data by a vehicle telematics/GPS system is an integral part of County operations and not subject to negotiation or modification. The following actions are expressly prohibited and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination:*

- *Any intentional disconnection or disabling of GPS devices installed in rolling stock or equipment.*
- *Any intentional interference with GPS device operation or with connected accessories such as sensors or cameras.*
- *Any modification or deletion of data collected by the vehicle telematics/GPS application with intent to influence outcomes.*
- *Any attempt to trigger alarms or engage in utilization patterns with the intent to manipulate the vehicle telematics/GPS system for a desired outcome."*

The IG learned through interviews with other PW employees during the investigation that LT126809 was previously assigned to Lawton and that LT126809 was not assigned to Jones until SO received new Ford Lightning Trucks in August 2025. At that time, Lawton assigned himself the Ford Lightning and assigned Jones LT126809. Therefore, Jones was not assigned to LT 126809 until after the date of the activity shown on the Tamper Report date; however, because the vehicle lacked a GPS device, we were unable to determine its location once it was assigned.

During this investigation, the PW Deputy Director learned that other SO managers had reported they removed GPS devices from their County vehicles because they believed managers should be exempt from tracking. The PW Deputy Director informed the IG that PW is coordinating with FO to replace the missing GPS devices.

**We determined Allegation 3 was unsubstantiated.**

## **Remote Work Allegations**

### **Allegation 4. Respondent 1 violated the Pinellas County Administrator Remote Work Policy.**

### **Allegation 5. Respondent 2 improperly authorized Respondent 1 to work remotely.**

During the investigation, the PW Director informed the IG that Lawton had authorized Jones to change his schedule due to child care needs while his spouse attended school. As stated in Allegation 1 above, PWADM-92-12, PW's Work Schedule Policy, states that an employee schedule change requires Division Director approval.

During an interview with the IG, Lawton stated he was not aware of the Work Schedule Policy until he was approached by the PW Director during the investigation. Prior to that time, if employees wanted to change their schedule, they would approach Lawton and discuss the situation. Lawton and the employee would discuss coverage, and then Lawton would determine the schedule change.

During an interview with the IG, the PW Director explained that PW had a policy requiring all staff to read and comply with all approved County policies.

The IG reviewed PWADM-1.4 Adherence to County Policies, which states:

#### **"Implementation**

*Each Public Works employee is expected to abide-by and follow County-approved policies. Each employee is responsible for reading the policies and asking for more information and clarification, if needed, in order to appropriately implement the policy in their position and/or job responsibilities."*

The policy above was implemented on May 1, 2020. As the Section Manager, Lawton was responsible for ensuring SO employees complied with policies and procedures. PWADM-92-12, PW's Work Schedule Policy was implemented on April 1, 2022. As the Section Manager, Lawton had a responsibility to maintain knowledge of PW policies and to inform staff of any applicable changes.

Lawton initially reported to the IG that in October or November 2025, Jones had a scheduling issue due to family needs, and Jones asked to change his schedule from Monday through Thursday to Tuesday through Friday. Another employee was able to trade schedules with Jones. Lawton approved the change. Lawton stated he was unaware of any other changes to Jones' schedule.

In an interview with the IG, the PW Deputy Director confirmed he was aware of a temporary schedule change for Jones, from November 2025 to December 2025. The PW Deputy Director approved Jones and another employee to temporarily trade schedules during this time.

The IG spoke to Lawton a second time to clarify the information he provided above, and Lawton corrected the timeframe and added that Jones was working remotely. Lawton stated Jones had approached him and asked to either flex his time or work from home, so he approved it. Lawton was unsure of the dates, but believed it was from approximately May through September of 2025.

Per the PW Director, Jones' position is not eligible for remote work. We reviewed the Pinellas County Administrator Remote Work Policy, which states:

*"Remote work compatibility criteria was utilized to classify positions, within each department, as eligible or ineligible for a remote working arrangement. Remote work arrangements are made at the discretion of department leadership and are not subject to appeal or grievance procedures.*

Jones standard work schedule is 4 days per week, 10 hours per day. PWADM-92-12, PW's Work Schedule Policy states the following:

*"b. Limitations on Remote Work Schedules:*

- i. Remote work eligible Public Works employees shall have a minimum of three in-office workdays per week.*
- ii. Assigned remote workdays cannot be back-to-back or coupled with a flex day.*
  - 1. Examples include Mon/Tues, Thurs/Fri, Mon/Fri, etc.*
  - 2. Example: Monday - Thursday 4-10 work schedule, the remote workday can be either Tuesday or Wednesday."*

The Pinellas County Administrator Remote Work Policy also prohibits remote workers from providing care for dependent children:

*"Environment -- All employees must work in a space that is organized, quiet, and generally free from interruptions/distractions. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that environmental standards are adhered to, which may require accommodations for child/adult care {sic} Remote workers shall not provide care for dependent children or adults during working hours."*

As an operations manager, Jones' responsibilities include preparing crews, gathering materials and equipment, and informing the crews of the work to be completed. Jones also conducted site visits as part of the quality assurance process.

During Jones' interview, Jones provided the following information related to this allegation:

In May 2025, Jones asked Lawton to approve a schedule change to allow Jones to flex his time or work remotely due to child care issues. Lawton approved Jones to work remotely on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday each

week. On Tuesdays, he was generally fully remote. On Wednesdays and Thursdays, Jones' time at the office varied depending on Jones' child care needs. Jones explained that he may work a few hours or the first half of the day in the office, then work remotely for the rest of the day. He may reverse his schedule and work in the office for the second half of the day, or if he cannot get child care, then he may work fully remote on those days. Jones stated that while working from home, his responsibility was to verify work in Cityworks, monitor emails, and read books about invasive species.

The PW Director provided a spreadsheet to the IG, which showed work orders closed in Cityworks from January through June 2025. Figure 3 below from the spreadsheet depicts Cityworks work orders closed by Jones from January through June 2025:

STATUS		CLOSED									
SUPERVISOR		(All)									
Sum of Number of WOs		CLOSED									
WOCLOSEDBY		CLOSED YR-MO	CLOSED Day of Week	1-SUN	2-MON	3-TUES	4-WED	5-THUR	6-FRI	7-SAT	Grand Total
Jones, Rob		2025-01		4							4
		2025-02		1	1				1		3
		2025-03		6	6					2	14
		2025-04		2						14	16
		2025-05							1		1
		2025-06				1			4	1	6
<b>Jones, Rob Total</b>				<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>				<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>44</b>

Figure 3 - Cityworks Work Orders Closed by Jones

Jones' standard schedule was Monday through Thursday during the period in Figure 3. Jones closed zero work orders on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.

During a second interview with the IG, Jones added he also returned calls to citizens while working at home. At the end of the first week of working from home, Jones realized he did not have enough work to stay busy, so he asked Lawton for suggestions. Jones then began watching YouTube videos of ponds to stay busy.

**We determined Allegations 4 and 5 were substantiated.**

## **Outside Employment Allegation**

### **Allegation 6. Respondent 1 engaged in outside employment without proper approval.**

During the investigation, the IG became aware that in addition to working for the County, Jones had a secondary employer. The IG reviewed Unified Personnel Board Policy #5 Outside or Non-County Employment (UPB 5), which states:

*"The County discourages all employees (classified, exempt, permanent and temporary) from engaging in employment outside of their regular County position. However, outside employment that is approved in advance by one's Appointing Authority is permitted."*

UPB 5 describes the mechanism for an employee to seek approval for outside employment as follows:

*"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."*

During an interview with the PW Director, the PW Director indicated they were unaware of the secondary employment. Prior to approval by the Appointing Authority, as required by UPB 5, the secondary employment would need to be approved by the department director.

The IG learned there is a known issue within OPUS related to the outside employment approval workflow. The task is not automatically routed to the appropriate approver. Each approver in the approval chain must delegate the approval to the next approver.

During an interview with Jones, he stated that before accepting the position outside the County, he received verbal approval from Lawton and submitted the proper form in OPUS. Jones stated he thought he had followed the policy, completed the form, and received approval. The IG reviewed OPUS and confirmed that Jones submitted the form.

As stated above, UPB 5 provides instructions for an employee who seeks approval for outside employment to complete a form available in OPUS. Jones completed this form and he indicated he received approval in OPUS. To Jones' knowledge, the approval was completed properly. The system's inability to route the document through the proper workflow should not reflect a policy violation for an employee who would otherwise be in compliance with the policy.

**We determined Allegation 6 was unfounded.**

# INVESTIGATION RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of our investigative work above, we have the following recommendations for management. Since PW terminated Respondent 2's employment during the investigation, we did not have any recommendations for the substantiated overtime allegation. Regarding the substantiated overtime and remote work allegations for Respondent 1, the IG recommended management consider disciplinary action. Management agreed with those recommendations, and a pre-disciplinary hearing was scheduled for April 27, 2026. However, Respondent 1 resigned on April 23, 2026. Therefore, the recommendations related to disciplinary action for Respondent 1 were no longer applicable and were removed from this final report.

## **Overtime Allegations**

The following management recommendations are based on the investigative work presented in the Investigative Activity and Conclusions Section of the report. The following recommendations are specific to the overtime-related allegations.

### **We Recommend Management:**

- A. Develop and implement an overtime approval process that requires director-level approval for all overtime.
- B. Review the current SO Work Order Log to remove duplicate and/or outdated work orders.
- C. Develop and implement a review process to ensure the SO Work Order Log is kept up to date.
- D. Coordinate with HR and the County Attorney's Office to determine if the overtime payments should be recouped.
- E. Ensure staff are trained to assign their time to projects for possible FEMA reimbursement.

### **Management Response and Action Plan:**

- A. **Management Concurs.** Public Works developed an overtime (OT) approval system where each request is reviewed by the applicable chain of command and final approvals are made by either the Department Director or the Deputy Director. A dashboard allows for review of the OT at the department level as well as the ability to drill down to specific work units or even specific employees. Going forward it is

expected that similar functionality will be available in the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Kyle Steele, Business Systems Analyst, Public Works
- ✓ **Planned Implementation Completion Date:** September 15, 2025 (Complete)

B. **Management Concurs.** When the issue came to light, department subject matter experts were brought in to assist. SO managers were assigned to review data and make determinations on duplicates and outdated information. Currently, the dashboard shows that 12% (148 out of 1,278) of the work orders are outdated or behind schedule, and roughly 2% (22 of 1,278) are duplicates. The SO Section will utilize the Public Works AMS Data Quality Dashboard to track and maintain a rating of 'EXCELLENT' by the end of FY 2026.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Frances Nunez Lugo, Division Director, Public Works/Stormwater and Vegetation Division
- ✓ **Planned Implementation Completion Date:** September 30, 2026

C. **Management Concurs.** The Public Works Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) Section developed a comprehensive Cityworks (AMS) Data Quality Dashboard that includes automated daily checks of the Work Order log. Among those checks are various rules to ensure 'Timeliness' and 'Uniqueness,' with detailed logic described within the dashboard itself.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Scott Stillwell, EAM Section Manager, Public Works/Customer and Technical Services Division.
- ✓ **Planned Implementation Completion Date:** October 30, 2025 (Complete)

D. **Management Concurs.** Management concurs and is coordinating the review of the case with Human Resources and the County Attorney's Office.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Kelli Hammer Levy, Director, Public Works
- ✓ **Planned Implementation Completion Date:** July 31, 2026

E. **Management Partially Concurs.** Employees are provided with detailed instructions on time coding in advance of and numerous times during each storm. As Public Works and specifically SO begin pre-storm preparations well in advance, employees are instructed on coding in OPUS and Cityworks. Further, dedicated Public Works staff are in the Field Emergency Operations Center and available via email to provide support as referenced in the communications. Example emails and support documents are included in Attachment 1. Further, the employees involved in this investigation are long-term staff who are well-versed in proper time coding for

storms. The Department will continue to review our emergency operations plan and associated training for opportunities to further improve in this area.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Nick Czaja, Emergency Management Coordinator, Public Works
- ✓ **Planned Implementation Completion Date:** June 1, 2026

### **GPS Device Allegation**

The following management recommendations are based on the investigative work presented in the Investigative Activity and Conclusions Section of the report. The following recommendations are specific to the GPS related allegation.

#### **We Recommend Management:**

- A. Ensure all compatible department vehicles/equipment have a working GPS.
- B. Coordinate with Pinellas County Fleet Operations to request and review quarterly GPS Tamper Reports.

#### **Management Response and Action Plan:**

- A. **Management Concurs.** Not all Public Works equipment can be outfitted with GPS due to compatibility limitations. By fall 2026, all Public Works rolling stock, along with select compatible equipment, will be equipped with and verified to have fully operational GPS units.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Robert Mills, Director, Office of Fleet and Asset Management
- ✓ **Planned Implementation Completion Date:** November 30, 2026

- B. **Management Concurs.** Pinellas County Fleet Management will produce a quarterly report identifying all GPS-equipped vehicles and equipment that have generated a validated inactivity/tamper alert.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Don Moore, Fleet Division Manager, Office of Fleet and Asset Management
- ✓ **Planned Implementation Completion Date:** June 30, 2026

### **Outside Employment Allegation**

The following management recommendation is based on the investigative work presented in the Investigative Activity and Conclusions Section of the report. This recommendation is specific to the allegation of outside employment.

### **We Recommend Management:**

Create and implement a process to ensure secondary employment is properly reviewed and approved.

### **Management Response and Action Plan:**

**Management Concur.** The department created an outside work form in SharePoint. Once the request has been approved by the Department Director, it can be uploaded into OPUS. Going forward, it is expected that the new ERP will be the system of record and will have the appropriate workflows to ensure adherence to County outside employment policies.

- ✓ **Individual(s) Responsible for Implementation:** Kyle Steele, Business Systems Analyst, Public Works
- ✓ **Planned Implementation Completion Date:** February 2026 (Complete)



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Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller  
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