

(Last month, a group of dispatchers reached out to us and asked for help getting a letter to each of you regarding their experiences with 911 dispatch. In the spirit of comradery, we offered our email marketing service for their use. Naturally we support our fellows in dispatch but want to make sure it's noted that any questions you may have should be directed to them. Jewell's contact info is above.)

The calm voice in the dead of night, the thin gold line connecting the community to emergency services. Sedgwick County dispatchers are the first point of contact in emergencies and the crucial first

step in saving time to save lives. It's a career that only 3% of the population is qualified to perform and we do it because we want to make a difference. We love our community and want to see it healthy and thriving. However, under the current leadership

of Sedgwick County Emergency Communications, it's become clear that facing a community crisis is not our only prerogative, as the internal crisis in the department is reaching a boiling point and mistakes are being made. Mistakes that many of us have been

warning the department about for years. Mistakes have now cost the life of Paoly Bedeski. One life loss due to the internal conflict at SGCO Emergency Communications is one too many. We have to make a big change, and we have to do it now.

I, along with my colleagues, have suffered under the oppressive work environment created by Elora Forshee, the current SGCO Emergency Communications Director. Our training was drastically cut back

and restructured, leading to a decline in our ability to perform our duties effectively. Communication Training Officers were vocal about needing more classroom training and more time with their trainees but were only met with forced-to-release unprepared

dispatchers. This has caused not only the premature dispatchers to leave but also first responders and tenured dispatchers all due to the lack of safety. Due to the lack of staffing under Forshee's watch, dispatch channels had to be combined and run by a single

dispatcher for both the fire channels and the sheriff and law enforcement channels -- adding risk to both the units and the dispatcher. The severe staffing issues have created a catastrophe of mentally drained, overworked 'warm bodies' in a chair and cutting

corners with less than capable dispatchers being allowed to continue to work, despite not being able to pass the testing. Forshee's underhanded commentary being that "we are all replaceable, including herself," as one example of her dishonest behavior.

Experienced dispatchers were driven away due to her duplicitous behavior and favoritism. Staffing that couldn't afford to be lost and has only exacerbated the severity of the internal crisis: Eighty percent of current staffing has under 2 years of experience as a direct result of Forshee's tyrannical leadership. Forshee's recent statement that the department is "meeting minimum staffing requirements" is another outright lie --proven further by the amount of forced overtime dispatchers endure to 'meet' that staffing and her emptying the Quality Assurance department to move that staff to the floor. Leaving no one to review calls or ensure that both call takers and dispatchers are following the correct policy and procedure. Since April of 2023, Elora Forshee disbanded the Quality Assurance program, and only recently, after the Brookhollow tragedy was it reinstated, again by Elora Forshee. There is simply not enough staff to have a fully operational Emergency Communications Department, with any real accountability, because of Forshee's discriminatory leadership. This creates a very real danger for everyone.

Still, despite numerous complaints lodged by employees, HR, the County Government, and even members of the public, Forshee has managed to evade scrutiny repeatedly. Now, this is not just about us as employees; it's about you as residents of Sedgwick County, too. The lack of thorough and adequate training for emergency dispatchers leads to life-threatening errors during crises- a risk no citizen should have to bear.

Corruption within any government body undermines public trust and hampers effective service delivery. In this case, it's affecting SGC0 dispatcher's ability to respond promptly and accurately during emergencies- a critical function that can mean the difference between life and death. Dispatchers cannot navigate both the very real gravity of public safety and the personal abuses Forshee enacts. Her disregard for employee well-being is continuously driving away much-needed staffing. SGC0-911 personnel deserve to feel safe in their work environment as they go head-to-head with tragedies, regularly, during their workday. Forshee does not make this a priority and further endangers the mental health of her staff.

She has allowed stalking behavior to persist between employees because staffing was more important than personal safety. She has expressed that black co-workers should be “used to” hearing derogatory

remarks and has used affirmative action to try to defend her blatant racism. To further show her bias she would sit black applicants with a black dispatcher so they “felt more comfortable.” As well as terminated employees who used FMLA-covered leave. Forshee has notoriously perpetuated rumors and gossip among staff which created unnecessary discourse among us as peers. Dispatchers deserve to be focused on community safety and best practices and not subject to name-calling, verbal assault, and outright bullying by Forshee.

We are calling on all concerned citizens of Sedgwick County, who believe in transparency, accountability, and

fair treatment in workplaces to join us in demanding an investigation into these allegations, the re-institution of adequate training, and most importantly, the removal of Elora Forshee along with anyone complicit in her behaviors. It’s time we held those

in power accountable for their actions and make SGCO Emergency Communications a functional, trustworthy lifeline for the community once again.

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