



***BROWARD COUNTY PBA
DAILY CLIPS***

March 16, 2017

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Pension denied for former Broward detective snared in Rothstein financial scandal

BYLINE: Mike Clary

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-reg-pompano-bso-pension-hearing-20170315-story.html>

STORY: Former Broward Sheriff's deputy who went to federal prison after being convicted in a case linked to the Scott Rothstein financial scandal has been denied a pension that would have provided him \$4,959 a month for life.

By a unanimous 8-0 vote, the Board of Trustees of the Pompano Beach Police and Firefighters' Retirement System said Wednesday that Jeff Poole would forfeit the benefits he had accrued during more than 20 years in law enforcement.

Poole began his law enforcement career with the Pompano Beach Police Department several years before it merged into the Sheriff's Office in 1999, and they remained in the city's pension system.

Poole, 49, of Weston, was sentenced to a year in prison in January 2014 after pleading guilty to conspiring to violate the civil rights of a woman he arrested at the request of BSO Lt. David Benjamin. He was released from prison in June 2015.

A plea deal signed by Poole in which he admitted his guilt in the criminal case was at the center of the day-long hearing held in the Emma Lou Olson Civic Center in Pompano Beach.

"We are really here today because Mr. Poole made decisions in his life...he now has to live with," said Gregg Rossman, a special counsel hired by the pension board. "He betrayed the oath he took when he took a job in public service,"

Poole pleaded guilty to conspiring to violate the civil rights of Marcy Romeo when in June 2009 he illegally arrested her on trumped-up prescription drug charges. He said he acted at the request of Benjamin, who was the third most powerful man at the Broward Sheriff's Office at the time.

Under questioning by Rossman on Wednesday, Poole said that Benjamin told him, "Make sure you arrest that bitch."

In entering his guilty plea, Benjamin told the court that he dispatched Poole to arrest Romeo and to run another woman, who was an "escort," out of state after that woman and her boyfriend threatened to expose her sexual relationship with Rothstein's then law partner, Stuart Rosenfeldt.

Rothstein set up Romeo's arrest as a favor to Romeo's ex-husband, Douglas Bates, to help him gain an advantage in an ongoing legal dispute about access to and custody of their daughter and son, who has autism, prosecutors said.

Bates, who was a lawyer in private practice, has been disbarred and is serving five years in prison for helping Rothstein — who is serving 50 years — to commit fraud.

Rothstein was accused of being the mastermind of a massive Ponzi scheme that bilked investors out of as much as \$1.2 billion before it collapsed,

Poole arrested Romeo, who was strip-searched and said she feared for her safety from deputies while she was in custody for 18 hours. He charged her with possession of a controlled substance, a third-degree felony punishable by up to five years in prison, and two misdemeanor counts of possession of drugs without a prescription.

State prosecutors dropped the charges when Romeo, who was recovering from a prescription drug addiction, was able to prove that the pills she had were legally prescribed for her and her teenage son.

Before the board, Poole's attorney Ronald Cohen said that although Poole pleaded guilty, his actions did not warrant losing his pension. He also said that Poole was pressured into taking the plea deal offered by federal prosecutors who threatened to charge him with other crimes that would result in years more prison time.

Rossman argued that Poole did Benjamin's bidding in order to stay "in the good graces" of the superior officer, who helped him avoid a transfer out of the elite Strategic Investigations Division. With overtime working narcotics cases, Poole said he was making about \$100,000 a year.

Benjamin, who remains in prison, was stripped of his \$6,859 monthly pension in January 2016

Before voting to deny Poole his pension, BSO Capt. Dan Christophers, a board trustee and SID commander, said that in his plea agreement Poole admitted violating not just Romeo's civil rights, but also accepted practices of policing. "It's hard for me to get over those facts," he said.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Ranches' suit against Pines over detention center moves forward

BYLINE: Brian Ballou

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/fl-sb-ranches-sues-pines-20170315-story.html>

STORY: A lawsuit filed four years ago by Southwest Ranches against Pembroke Pines over the thwarted creation of a federal detention center is heading to a jury trial in November.

Ranches is seeking at least \$45 million against Pines for meddling in the town's deal to build a 1,500-bed facility on 24 acres near the border of the two municipalities. The site, west of Southwest 196th Avenue between Sheridan Street and Stirling Road, would have been used by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to hold immigrant detainees.

A Broward District Court judge last month denied Pines' attempt to have the case dismissed. The trial will start the week of Nov. 13.

ICE walked away from the \$75 million deal in 2012. The town was counting on the tax revenue from the facility to fund its municipal services.

"The town is incredibly pleased that the judge has ruled in its favor...and looks forward to resolving this matter in November," said Town Attorney Keith Poliakoff.

Pines City Attorney Sam Goren declined to comment on pending litigation.

The relationship between Ranches and Pines has been bitter for more than two decades and there has been a steady stream of lawsuits, counter suits and appeals over the past five years, over the detention center, road access and the development of a charter school near their border.

MEDIA OUTLET: Sun Sentinel

HEADLINE: Hollywood city attorney taking leave after DUI arrest

BYLINE: Susannah Bryan

LINK: <http://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/hollywood/fl-sb-hollywood-city-attorney-arrested-fallout-20170314-story.html>

STORY: City Attorney Jeff Sheffel on Wednesday was granted a 30-day leave of absence, after his arrest Sunday night on DUI charges.

Sheffel had requested the leave, which five of his seven commission bosses agreed to after a long debate.

Commissioners Traci Callari and Peter Hernandez disagreed, saying he should resign or be fired from his \$210,000-a-year job.

But Mayor Josh Levy and the rest of the commission argued Sheffel, who was not at the meeting, should be given a second chance.

“He’s not here to speak for himself,” Commissioner Kevin Biederman said. “We’re not here to have a trial. I don’t think we should have a knee-jerk reaction.”

“I appreciate their consideration,” Sheffel told the Sun Sentinel in a text message.

Hollywood commissioners asked Deputy City Attorney Alan Fallik to handle Sheffel’s duties until his return.

Sheffel, 57, was arrested Sunday after he drove his car onto a sidewalk on a bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway. He stopped his car only after it got wedged between a concrete wall and a guardrail along the Hollywood Boulevard bridge. The car later had to be removed by crane.

Sheffel told the Sun Sentinel he’d fallen asleep at the wheel but was not drunk. He attributed his drowsiness to lack of sleep, missing his dose of diabetes medication and being out in the sun all day at the city’s St. Patrick’s Day festival. But a police report claims he told a Hollywood officer he’d had too many beers.

At Hollywood’s request, the Broward Sheriff’s Office handled the arrest to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

In other action, commissioners agreed to give themselves an 11 percent pay raise, their first since Hollywood declared financial urgency in 2011 and made pay cuts citywide.

The base salary for commissioners will increase from \$25,200 to \$28,000. The mayor’s salary will go from \$34,200 to \$38,000.

Future salary hikes will be automatic and equal to pay raises received by non-union employees.

MEDIA OUTLET: Broward Beat

HEADLINE: Latest Round In Battle Between Broward Mayor & Broward Sheriff

BYLINE: Buddy Nevins

LINK: <http://www.browardbeat.com/broward-mayor-vs-broward-sheriff-the-latest-round/>

STORY: The bad blood between Sheriff Scott Israel and Broward Mayor Barbara Sharief bled into Miramar's election Tuesday.

When the results were counted it was Sharief who needed a transfusion.

Here is the story:

The Miramar city election was a battle of robo calls between Israel and Sharief.

Israel recorded calls for incumbent Miramar Commissioner Yvette Colbourne. Sharief made calls for challenger Venessa Walker.

Colbourne, supported by the sheriff, won re-election easily – 4,240 to 2,847.

The defeat must sting Sharief even more than her past losses to the sheriff. Miramar is Sharief's hometown and political base.

The feud between Israel and Sharief has been bubbling beneath the surface for months:

In July, 2016, Sharief was reportedly boiling mad about comments that Israel made after an escape from the jail. The sheriff partially blamed the escape on inadequate security funding from the Broward County Commission.

"Philosophically, there's a difference between Broward County and your sheriff. The county believes my job is to save dollars. I believe my job is to save lives," Israel told the media.

Ouch!!!

In January, Sharief clashed with Israel over his media appearances in the wake of the murderous Fort Lauderdale Airport shooting.

The following story is one that Israel conveyed to several others:

Sharief was reportedly furious that she was not getting the bulk of the media attention.

"Barbara began calling into TV shows and putting out false information," said a Browardbeat.com source.

(RedBroward.com had a story on this aspect of the Sharief's actions, too. It is linked here.)

Coverage of the sheriff continued. Sharief got so mad she called Israel yelling.

“You are not the face of Broward County. I am the face of Broward County,” she reportedly roared at Israel.

“This was a criminal attack and it involved a crime scene,” Israel fired back. “It is a law enforcement matter. Don’t ever call me and yell at me like I’m your employee.”

Both abruptly hung up.

March 14, 2017, Sharief and Israel sparred again with competing robo calls. Israel’s candidate won. So what’s next?

Watch for Sharief to make trouble for Israel during the 2017-2018 budget discussions later this year.

MEDIA OUTLET: ABC Miami (Channel 10)

HEADLINE: Hollywood city attorney requests leave of absence after DUI arrest

BYLINE: Peter Burk

LINK: <http://www.local10.com/news/florida/hollywood/hollywood-city-attorney-requests-leave-of-absence-after-dui-arrest>

STORY: HOLLYWOOD, Fla. - Hollywood city attorney Jeff Sheffel has requested a leave of absence after his arrest on suspicion of driving under the influence.

Sheffel, 57, sent a letter to city commissioners Tuesday requesting a 30-day leave of absence.

A Broward Sheriff's Office deputy arrested Sheffel on Sunday after he drove his car onto the sidewalk of the Hollywood Boulevard bridge.

Sheffel told Local 10 News that he had just gotten into town after a red-eye flight from Colorado.

"I think I fell asleep and had the accident," Sheffel said after he was released from jail on bond.

Jeff Sheffel Leave of Absence Request

In his letter, Sheffel wrote that he "reached the conclusion that the best interests of the city would be served" if he took a leave of absence.

Sheffel recommended deputy city attorney Alan Fallik to serve as temporary acting city attorney during his absence.

After his leave of absence, Sheffel said that he intends to return to work "to continue to provide the level of service to the city that you have come to expect and deserve from your city attorney."