

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

COOK COUNTY

JOHN SPIEKER

MAY 6, 2025

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT TO ATTORNEY / CLIENT PRIVILEGE

BY

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**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
EXHIBITS**

- A. April 16, 2025, Grievance Submitted by [REDACTED]
- B. April 16, 2025, Grievance Submitted by [REDACTED]
- C. Correspondence between [REDACTED], Alison McIntyre, and John Spieker Dated April 16, 2025
- D. Correspondence between [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and Alison McIntyre Dated April 21, 2025
- E. Correspondence between John Spieker, [REDACTED], and Alison McIntyre Dated April 17, 2025
- F. Correspondence between Alison McIntyre, [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] Dated April 22, 2025
- G. Correspondence from Alison McIntyre to the Behavioral Health Team Dated April 23, 2025
- H. Cook County PHHS Social Services Intake Policy and Procedures
- I. Correspondence dated April 15, 2025, Regarding Policy Procedures
- J. Cook County Handbook Unlawful Harassment Policy
- K. Correspondence Regarding One-on-One Meetings with John Spieker
- L. Correspondence between John Spieker, [REDACTED], and Alison McIntyre Dated April 22, 2025
- M. Exit Interview Questions
- N. Grievance Timeline Prepared by Alison McIntyre
- O. Notice to Employee Witnesses – [REDACTED]
- P. Notice to Employee Complainant – [REDACTED]
- Q. Notice to Employee Complainant – [REDACTED]
- R. Notice to Employee Witnesses – [REDACTED]
- S. Notice to Employee Witnesses – [REDACTED]
- T. Notice to Employee Witnesses – [REDACTED]
- U. Notice to Employee Witnesses – Alison McIntyre
- V. Notice to Employee Witnesses – [REDACTED]
- W. Notice of Rights Employee – John Spieker

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MAY 6, 2025

COOK COUNTY INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

I. BACKGROUND OF INVESTIGATION

This is a report of an investigation into allegations of employee misconduct against John Spieker. The investigation was authorized by Dyan Ebert, labor counsel to Cook County.

In summary, the reports allege that Spieker raised his voice at staff and spoke in a threatening manner during a behavioral health team meeting which led to staff members feeling uncomfortable and unsafe.

II. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

Documents reviewed are attached to this report as exhibits.

III. INVESTIGATION

Investigative interviews were conducted on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, in the Conference Room at the Cook County Courthouse in Grand Marais, Minnesota. The interviews were as follows: [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], Alison McIntyre, and John Spieker were all interviewed in person. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] were interviewed via Microsoft Teams and [REDACTED] was interviewed via teleconference. The record was closed on May 6, 2025.

IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. John Spieker is the Behavioral Health Team Supervisor in the Public Health and Human Services (PHHS) Department of Cook County. He has been in this role since 2023, as it was a new position that was created that year. The behavioral health team has four subparts and Spieker directly supervises each employee on the team. Spieker's supervisor is PHHS Director Alison McIntyre. Spieker has no prior disciplinary history at Cook County.
2. [REDACTED] is a [REDACTED] for Cook County. [REDACTED] has worked for the county for a little over [REDACTED]. Spieker is [REDACTED] supervisor.
3. [REDACTED] is an [REDACTED] for Cook County. [REDACTED] has worked for the county for [REDACTED] is supervised by Spieker.
4. Both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] describe working in a department with a distinct lack of onboarding and training. Spieker's supervisory style is described as "passive-aggressive," unsupportive, and hands-off followed by intense periods of control and micromanagement.
5. On Monday, April 14, during the weekly case review meeting, the [REDACTED] intake schedule was a topic of discussion. There was a lot of concern building in the department regarding

the coverage of intake shifts. Spieker announced that [REDACTED] would be taking intake shifts [REDACTED]

- a. PHHS maintains an Intake Policy and Procedure that provides, “Social workers are not expected to provide intake coverage until they are in a new position for at least 6 months, unless they have recent experience in a previous position covering social services intake.” See Exhibit H.
6. When Spieker announced that [REDACTED] would start working intake after less than [REDACTED] [REDACTED] was shocked. [REDACTED] stated that [REDACTED] did not feel trained nor ready to do intake. [REDACTED] referenced the Intake Policy and Procedure and noted that [REDACTED]. Spieker responded by dismissing the policy and stating that “policy” is a loose term and that he, as the supervisor, decided when [REDACTED] was ready. [REDACTED] was upset by Spieker’s response. [REDACTED] felt extremely uncomfortable starting intake so soon.
 7. The following day on Tuesday, April 15, [REDACTED] again brought up concerns regarding [REDACTED] taking intake shifts during the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] reiterated that she did not feel ready to start intake shifts, but expressed wanting to shadow other team members first to ease into the work. [REDACTED] This was upsetting to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] voiced that everyone has a different range of what they think is difficult. [REDACTED] wanted to support [REDACTED] and validate [REDACTED] concerns about starting intake [REDACTED].
 8. At this point in the meeting, Spieker raised his voice and announced that it is his decision when a staff member would start intake and he declared the conversation over. Both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] described Spieker’s voice as being loud, elevated, and threatening. Spieker’s reaction caused both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to feel uncomfortable. Spieker admitted to using an elevated tone and raising his voice. He felt that his actions were warranted in the moment to firmly convey to the team that the topic would not be discussed further that day.
 - a. [REDACTED] attended the April 15 meeting by videoconference. In real time [REDACTED] emailed several colleagues quoting Spieker’s words because [REDACTED] was so shocked by his tone and behavior. [REDACTED] wrote in the email, “I am incredibly uncomfortable about this.” See Exhibit I.
 - b. On April 9, 2025, [REDACTED] met with McIntyre to share concerns about [REDACTED] onboarding, training, and work experience with Spieker [REDACTED]. McIntyre suggested that [REDACTED] raise these concerns directly to Spieker and offered no other meaningful resolution. McIntyre shared [REDACTED] concerns with Spieker prior to April 15. This information may have flavored how Spieker reacted to [REDACTED] during the [REDACTED] meeting.
 9. On April 16, [REDACTED] submitted a written grievance to McIntyre and [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. See Exhibit A. On that same day, [REDACTED] submitted a written grievance to McIntyre [REDACTED]. See Exhibit B. The grievances were

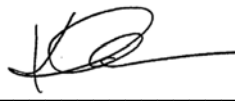
submitted under the Cook County Employee Handbook provision prohibiting [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] See Exhibit J.

10. McIntyre was on vacation the week of April 14th and was not immediately aware of the written grievances.
11. [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] worked together to address the grievance process. Because both [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] expressed [REDACTED] with Spieker due to his behavior, [REDACTED] was given the option to work from home for the remainder of the week and the situation would be addressed again when McIntyre returned from vacation. See Exhibit C. [REDACTED] was also given the opportunity to work from home. See Exhibit D.
12. While working from home, [REDACTED] received a request from Spieker to meet four days a week by videoconference for supervisory time. Prior to the filing of [REDACTED] grievance, Spieker only met with [REDACTED] two times a week for this purpose. [REDACTED] felt that the increased meeting schedule was directly related to [REDACTED] raising concerns about Spieker's behavior. [REDACTED] did not feel comfortable meeting with him one-on-one. Spieker also required that [REDACTED] prepare a summary of the work [REDACTED] had completed during [REDACTED] remote work days and informed [REDACTED] that he would not approve [REDACTED] timecard without the additional information. Prior to filing [REDACTED] grievance, [REDACTED] had not been required to submit summaries of [REDACTED] work in order to have [REDACTED] timecard approved. Further, [REDACTED] already keeps track of [REDACTED] work in the SSIS program, which Spieker can easily access. [REDACTED] felt that the request to create a summary of [REDACTED] work was further retaliation for [REDACTED] grievance. See Exhibit K.
13. Spieker sent an email to [REDACTED] and McIntyre expressing concern regarding the decision they made to allow [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to work remotely. He did not feel that he could adequately supervise their work remotely and he felt that they were not communicating well with him. See Exhibit E.
14. Due to the growing concerns and atmosphere in the work environment, on April 22, 2025, Spieker was asked to work from home immediately starting the following day, a decision made by the [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] See Exhibit F.
15. However, upon returning from vacation, McIntyre expressed concern surrounding the decision to have Spieker work from home because of his clinical supervisory duties in relation to the employees. She expressed concern that she was not included in the decision to have Spieker work remotely. See Exhibit F. It was decided that Spieker would, in fact, return to the work environment. Spieker also raised similar concerns to [REDACTED] on April 22. See Exhibit L.
16. On April 23, 2025, McIntyre sent out an email to the behavioral health team sharing updates which included that Spieker would be returning to the office for work and that the team members are expected to work with Spieker as their supervisor, and McIntyre would

be available to attend any one-on-one meetings so that employees would not need to meet with Spieker alone. See Exhibit G.

- a. [REDACTED] was unable to report to work on [REDACTED] because [REDACTED] messaged [REDACTED] and McIntyre, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Spieker's return to the workplace and related issues.
17. PHHS has suffered from being understaffed for a long period of time. The behavioral health team, in particular, has struggled to retain staff. [REDACTED] believes that multiple staff have quit or transferred to other PHHS teams to avoid working with Spieker and due to a lack of leadership in the department as a whole. However, there were very few exit or transfer interviews completed for staff who left in [REDACTED]. Three were provided that referenced departmental and supervisory issues. See Exhibit M. PHHS previously brought in an outside consultant to work with Spieker on conflict resolution, but the process appears to have been abandoned amid staff turnover and transition.
 - a. [REDACTED].
18. There is no doubt that Spieker handled the communication surrounding the intake schedule poorly. [REDACTED] was already feeling undertrained and unsupported when it was announced at a meeting that [REDACTED] would start intake [REDACTED]. Spieker chose to react to appropriate professional push back against his announcement in an overly aggressive and angry manner.
19. The supervisory relationship between Spieker and the majority of his team has completely ruptured, and he has lost the faith of many that he supervises. Spieker violated Cook County policies and expectations surrounding respectful workplace behavior. Spieker's decision to increase the frequency of supervisory meetings with [REDACTED] and requiring new documentation of work immediately after [REDACTED] submitted [REDACTED] grievance added even more pressure and discomfort to the situation.
20. The administrative reversals of work from home, return to work, etc. were unnecessarily disruptive to staff and increased the atmosphere of stress surrounding the grievances.
21. It is apparent that there are larger departmental issues brewing surrounding onboarding, training, and leadership that if left unaddressed, will likely result in further staff attrition. Many of these concerns, which are beyond the scope of this investigation, are described by witnesses in the interview transcripts that follow and should be reviewed closely.

Dated: May 6, 2025

By 

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