



SHEEHAN REPORT

Edward T. O'Leary, Chief of Police
December 10, 2014

In January of 1998, a man arrived at the Police Station and asked to speak with a detective to report allegations of past sexual assault. On duty was Detective Sergeant James Kozak that conducted an initial interview with the person. In learning the circumstances of the report Kozak created a case file and set up additional interviews with the 1st victim and other individuals that the victim had spoken with. As part of his investigation, he contacted the Norfolk county District Attorney's Office, in particular, the Sexual Assault Unit, Patricia Negreli and had contacted a School Principal to gather information about William Sheehan, a person that was a former Teacher in the Foxborough Public Schools.

As Detective Sergeant Kozak continued this case, other interviews were conducted, and Sheehan's personnel folder was given to him. As a result of this investigation a case was prepared and sent to the District Attorney's Office for their review. Kozak has also started a process to located William Sheehan in Florida. As a result of this review, a letter was received from the District Attorney's Office stating that the Statute of Limitation had expired, and criminal prosecution could not be undertaken.

As a result of this, the case investigation was suspended. Detective Sergeant Kozak spoke with the victim, and advised him of the District Attorney's response, and mentioned that Civil Litigation may be possible.

In July of 2000, James Kozak resigned his position here in Foxborough and was named Chief of Police for the Town of Millis.

In late July of 2012, this officer had received a telephone call from Superintendent of Schools Deborah Spinelli about a conversation she had earlier in the week with a school employee. This employee had stated he had been molested by a teacher in the Public Schools while at the Lewis and Burrell schools. Ms. Spinelli wanted to ask what she could do. She also related that the teacher's name was given as William Sheehan. After learning of the nature of the molestation of the victim, I recalled a case that James Kozak had investigated. I advised Ms. Spinelli to have the person contact this Department and ask for the Detective Division. Upon ending the conversation I went directly to the Detective Office and spoke with Detective Thomas Kirrane. I advised him of what this officer had learned from the School Superintendent, and that we may be getting a call from a child victim who was now an adult. I also informed him of a case from the late 1990's that had been investigated by Jim Kozak, and that he should review that case in preparation for any interview. Later that week, Detective Kirrane stated he had found the original case (during our move to the Public Safety Building,

older, inactive cases were still crated in a storage closet); and had also interviewed the victim that had disclosed sexual assaults by Sheehan to the School Superintendent. Based on his assessment of the case; Detective Kirrane asked if Youth Crisis Officer Timothy O'Leary could assist with the investigation. This officer spoke with both Kirrane and O'Leary about working the case. This officer also asked Superintendent Spinelli to locate any records the School Department may have had. (During this time period she had three different people go through stored records but was unable to find Sheehan's) At a later time it was discovered in one of the boxed crates, and learned Kozak had received it from Principal John Foscaldo. (This was verified during an interview with Mr. Foscaldo.)

Detectives interviewed the first new victim in detail, and informed me of the information. It was also learned that from this interview, there appeared to be other victims still in the community that had also been assaulted. This officer advised the Detectives to contact the District Attorney's Office and to coordinate the case with their staff. This officer also contacted the Executive Assistant District Attorney, Jean Marie Carroll, and provided her with a briefing of what had been initiated, and the potential of having a serial offender that had molested children for almost 20 years.

The District Attorney's Office had Assistant District Attorney Michelle Armour (Chief of the Sexual Assault Bureau) and Trooper Kathy Prince to assist in the case. At that time the District Attorney's staff had their files from the 1998 case. In the file there was a letter dated May of 2001 and addressed to Chief James Kozak of the Millis Police. The nature of the letter indicated that there may be a possibility to reopen the case from 1998. (This officer interviewed retired Chief Kozak at least twice. The first was when the case was initiated, if he remembered anything about it, and he referred me to his reports that had been done. A second interview was done about the letter addressed to him in Millis. Kozak stated he never received such a letter, and had he done so he would have contacted me and Detectives of the Foxborough Police)

Throughout the balance of August 2012 into early September, the investigative team continued to interview victims that had come forward. A special District Attorney was assigned to manage information that would be needed to obtain criminal complaints as well as search warrants.

Investigators went to what had been Sheehan's home a 81 Willow Street, where the current homeowner allowed access for officers to take photographs of both the interior of the house, and backyard area where Boy Scouts camp outs happened.

In early September, the District Attorney's office furnished preparing Arrest Warrants on four specific cases that were within the Statute of Limitations and could be prosecuted. Three of the charges would be from Norfolk County, while one case took place in Bristol County. On September 12th, Detective Tim O'Leary and Trooper Kathy Prince travelled to Florida, and with the assistance of the local Sheriff's office, went to Sheehan's home, only to find his son living there, and that William Sheehan was living in a secure assisted living facility. The officer team then went to that location and made contact with the facility's staff about Sheehan. Officers observed Sheehan being fed by a Staff member, and attempted to interview him. Mr. Sheehan was incoherent and the officers then spoke with staff about his condition. Due to his medical conditions and based on observations and reports from Staff; the District Attorney's Office postponed taking Sheehan into custody, as he was in a monitored secure facility, he did not have ability to escape the area. The team returned to the son's home, interviewed him and was allowed to walk around the home's interior taking pictures. It was learned that William Sheehan had lost his Florida teaching certificate in 1990 due to sexual assaults at Boy Scout events from 1988-1989 that took place in Florida. There was never any indication that this process or reports were provided to local law enforcement. A data search by officers of that community, the only entries in the mid 2000's was of Sheehan being a missing person, when he walked away from his home due to his medical condition. Sheehan was eventually hospitalized due to his medical condition.

The District Attorney's Office filed paperwork to obtain William Sheehan's medical records on his condition, and made arrangements to have these reviewed by a Psychiatrist. The case was suspended while this review would take place.

As the case had become public, the investigative team interviewed fifteen (15) more victims between September 17, 2012 and November 1, 2012 who had come forward. Also three other people were interviewed to see if they had any additional information. Records from December 2012 through January 2013 were released by the Boy Scouts of America about scout leaders that were removed due to sexual misconduct. The first release was of incidents prior to 1985. The second release contained incidents after 1985. These files were reviewed and Sheehan's name was not on the list. Mr. Sheehan's name was not on either list even though his Florida incident happened in 1988-1989.

In January 2013, Detective Tim O'Leary interviewed Phil Littlefield; who had been the assistant principle of the Ahern School during Sheehan's last year. Littlefield, at the time of the interview was a School Superintendent in northern Massachusetts. In this interview it was learned that Sheehan was not facing any disciplinary action, and had only talked about moving to Florida. This officer also talked to various retired school

staff members about Sheehan for any recollections they might have on his activities at the schools. None of them related information about any poor conduct.

In mid-2013, the Norfolk County District Attorney's office found that Sheehan was not competent to stand trial. The outstanding warrants are remained in force, should he ever be released from the facility he is in. Since then people do reach out to provide information on Sheehan's activity, but don't want to be part of the victims group, and during October 2014, I was approached by a man who related he had been assaulted by Sheehan in the late 1970's. Detective O'Leary did a follow up interview with him. In September of 2013, FBI Agent and Profiler team examined the reports and spoke with Detective O'Leary. Where we had a named suspect, against whom a criminal case could not be brought, there was no additional assistance they could provide. In March of 2014, Sheehan's personnel folder from the school system was found in one of the files from a previous year. Detective O'Leary interviewed retired Principal John Foscaldo, who related that he gave the packet to Detective Kozak. In reviewing the documents, there was no evidence or information about negative issues.

William Sheehan grew up in Mansfield and graduated from Mansfield High School in 1957. He went on to go to College in Missouri (Drury College in Springfield). During college Sheehan is reported to be a competitive swimmer, and as part of his community outreach in youth ministry, he taught young boys how to swim. In June of 1961, Sheehan graduated from Drury with a Degree in Ministry Studies (B.A. Philosophy-Religion-Psychology). Later that month he was hired to be the lifeguard at the Lakeview Pond Town swimming facility, according to the June 22, 1961 Foxboro reporter. (He would continue in this post until the fall of 1980) From 1961 – 1962 Sheehan attended the Newton-Andover Theological Seminary and in May of 1963 he was hired by the School Committee to be a teacher in the elementary level, fifth grade at the Center School. Over time he had several transfers, first to Lewis in 1964, Burrell in 1969 and to the Ahern Middle School in the 1970's. During the spring of 1981 he announced his resignation from the school with the end of the school year, and Jack Authelet wrote an article about his moving to Florida.

When first hired Sheehan lived in Mansfield, and moved to Foxborough at 81 Willow Street in 1963-1964. Along with Teaching, Sheehan also became involved as a Scout Leader and assuming Troop Leader Status in December of 1965.

In assessing information obtained with interviews among the victims, Sheehan was more physically aggressive with early victims. Based on the techniques Sheehan used, he would be considered an acquaintance child molester. Sheehan used his various

positions to “groom” his victims, often having contact with the parents of victims that would re-enforce his authority over the child victim.

Acquaintance child molesters typically groom and seduce their child victims with an effective combination of attention, affection, kindness privileges and gifts; until such time the victims' inhibitions have been lowered, and control is gained. Often the offender has contact with victim's parents to help launch the campaign, in the parent's mind becoming a “Trusted adult”.

(Child Molesters: A Behavioral Analysis, author Kenneth Lanning (FBI, Ret))

Prior to the development of the Sheehan case, the YMCA had approached this officer along with School Superintendent Spinelli with a Youth Protection Program, Darkness 2 Light. We both reviewed the program introduction, and believed it would help adults have a better understanding about child sexual abuse. This officer presented the program to then Town Manager Kevin Paicos, who had all Town employees at Town Hall take the class. At a later time, Superintendent Spinelli had all school personnel attend this training, making all adults protectors of children. Both Fire and Police personnel used the online course to educate our staff of child sexual abuse.

Our community took a definitive step forward with the establishments of the Child Protection Committee in the Fall of 2013, and became a permanent Town Committee at the May 2014 Town Meeting.

CONCLUSION

In both instances (1998 and 2012) the Foxborough Police conducted vigorous investigations of the allegations made by victims concerning the sexual assault of children by William Sheehan. During the investigation started in 2012, twenty three (23) victims were interviewed, and 2 additional unrelated issues were uncovered. Another eleven (11) interviews also took place with people that may have had information about the suspect. During the course of the investigation, the Detective Division received additional support from the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office, and with Massachusetts State Police Troopers assigned to that office. Additionally, this agency reached out for assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in reviewing the investigation.

During the course of the case, interviewed victims shared concerns about other potential victims and gave names to staff members. The Detective team and this officer made a decision that we would not contact them, out of respect for their feelings and privacy.

There was extensive speculation that Sheehan left the community as a result of disciplinary action or threats of criminal charges. Although numerous people were interviewed, there was no indication that anyone in the Police Department, School Administration, Scout Leadership or Town Government was aware of Sheehan's pervasive criminal assaults on children. Based on this factor it is critically important that we continue to educate children and parents about the awareness of sexual predators and their behaviors and educate them to take action by telling someone, be it a policeman, a community leader or school administrator. Our community has already taken initial steps in protecting one of our most vulnerable groups, children and as a community we must rigorously continue our efforts.