MICHAEL E. "TED" FITZGERALD
Community Development Director
Director of County Operations
County Legal Counsel
94235 Moore Street | Suite 123
Gold Beach, OR 97444
(541) 247-3291
CountyCounsel@co.curry.or.us

April 3, 2026

Sent via Email only.

Department of Public Safety
Standards and Training (DPSST)
4190 Aumsville Highway
Salem, OR 97317
Oregon.DPSST@DPSST.Oregon.gov

Re: Formal Complaint
Curry County Sheriff John Ward, DPSST #24573

To whom it may concern:

I am the appointed County Legal Counsel for Curry County, Oregon, and have served as such since November, 2023. My role requires me to provide legal advice and guidance to the Curry County Board of Commissioners ("BOC") as well as other County elected officials and department heads. While reviewing certain issues brought to my attention by my supervisors, employees, and even members of the general public, serious concerns arose regarding the conduct of Curry County Sheriff, John Ward.

The first step in addressing these concerns was to obtain a thorough third-party investigation. Retired police chief Jim Ferraris of Ferraris Investigations and Consulting, LCC was chosen for this task primarily due to his extensive background in law enforcement and specific knowledge of relevant laws, policies, and procedures.

The attached complaint presents facts and documentation regarding the sale of County-owned ammunition facilitated by Sheriff John Ward in direct violation of Oregon Law and DPSST ethical and certification standards.

Sincerely,

Michael E. "Ted" Fitzgerald

County owned ammunition purchases:

It appears that Sheriff John Ward, DPSST No. 24573 facilitated the order of $9,731.00 of assorted 9mm, .223 and .40 ammunition from Dooley Enterprises, Inc. in Anaheim, California. Including a shipping cost of $546.49, the total for this ammunition order was $10,277.49. This cost was paid using county funds. It also appears that this ammunition was sold to various members of CCSO and to non-members. Each purchaser wrote CCSO a check as follows:

12-09-20	CCSO Sheriff John Ward	$766.00
12-06-20	CCSO Deputy Jared Gray	$356.50
12-09-20	CCSO Deputy Jordan White	$2,845.00
12-07-20	CCSO Deputy Mello	$193.00
12-08-20	CCSO Deputy Lang	$108.00
12-08-20	CCSO Deputy Denney	$108.00
12-08-20	CCSO Deputy Joel Hensley	$119.50
12-08-20	Joshua Stout (non-county)	$1,626.00
12-08-20	CCSO Deputy Teter	$732.00
12-09-20	CCSO Deputy Joshua Frame	$690.50
12-09-20	CCSO Deputy Vershall	$690.50
12-09-20	CCSO Res. Deputy Brad Alcorn	$193.00
12-09-20	CCSO Deputy Storns	$527.00
12-09-20	John Ensley-Ensley Construction	$527.00
12-09-20	CCSO Captain Phil McDonald	$216.00
12-13-20	CCSO Deputy Jordan Rhodes	$119.50

According to County Finance records, these checks total $9,817.50 and were deposited into the Sheriff's Reserve Account.

On review, it appears that the purchasers received this ammunition at a law enforcement discounted rate as sold to CCSO by the vendor. It is evident that the purchasers did not reimburse the county for the shipping cost of $546.49 for this ammunition.

Based upon the caliber and amounts of ammunition purchased by these individuals, it is evident that these purchases were for personal use.

According to the invoice description of purchased ammunition, much is Winchester "Ranger" ammunition. "Ranger" ammunition is not traditionally practice ammunition due to cost and is traditionally law enforcement duty grade ammunition.

Please see the ammunition invoice, copies of cancelled checks and finance documents, along with emails to/from Sheriff Ward which are enclosed with this correspondence. Note that this purchase was not a standalone event, and that this type of transaction, including the trade discussed below, appears to have occurred several times. Additional documentation of other instances is available upon request.

A material financial gain was obtained by CCSO members through the purchase and sale of ammunition not afforded to the general public, and at a price not inclusive of shipping costs ultimately subsidized by Curry County. The above-described actions of the Curry County Sheriff in facilitating the purchase and sale of ammunition appear to be in violation of ORS 244.040 (Prohibited use of official position or office) and OAR 259-008-0300 (Grounds for Denial, Revocation or Emergency Suspension of Public Safety Professional Certifications)

Sheriff Ward's responses to inquiries:

Sheriff Ward has continually refused County Counsel's lawful and appropriate requests for records and documentation concerning these issues. Ward claimed that a "Ransome Ware" attack in 2023 caused the loss of all of CCSO's records of the transactions, which is just not true.

When County Legal Counsel brought the ammunition and weapons issues to the attention of Sheriff Ward by email on November 14, 2025, he replied that the opportunity to purchase ammunition was offered to employees who wanted to practice shooting to stay proficient with their weapons, as it is a certification requirement. Furthermore, Sheriff Ward wrote that he did not know who bought the ammunition or what type was purchased and that he did know that no county money was used for the ammunition purchase, and there were no financial benefits to county employees who bought the ammunition. Ammunition purchase invoices included herein reflect the Sheriff's Office actual executed policy of purchasing ammunition at County cost for employees. The instant case departs from normal County procedure, wherein employees used their own money to purchase personal ammunition for their own use through the County. The last sentence of Sheriff Ward's response states "We have done nothing wrong and as far as your demands, this is all the information that we have to give." Based on the limited information provided by Sheriff Ward's email of November 14, 2025, Ferraris' investigation was able to verify that Ward's explanation and justification is just not true. Sheriff Ward himself bought nearly $800.00 of ammunition. Each person purchasing the ammunition benefited from use of county funds to purchase the ammunition and the county bore the cost of the $546.49 shipping charges. The response received from Sheriff Ward are misleading and inaccurate.

In the attached documentation, it can be seen that Sheriff John Ward purchased one case of 9mm, one case of .40 Smith & Wesson, and one case of .223. It is reasonable to assume that Ward was still in possession of a .40 Smith & Wesson some three years after a “trade-in” occurred in which the County .40 Smith & Wessons were traded for 9mm duty weapons, about which, when asked, Ward said that he had no knowledge of who had traded in their guns and who had kept their guns. It appears that he either purchased his former duty weapon or simply retained it in his or the County’s possession. In any case, that information is relevant to the inquiries made to Sheriff Ward in regard to this matter. At all times, Sheriff Ward was not forthcoming with facts specific to his involvement.

When County Counsel requested to begin the process of CJIS clearance so that he could review the digital information regarding this issue, Sheriff Ward provided a statement from Nicholas Harris, the Oregon State Police CJIS Information Security Officer and directed his staff not to proceed with CJIS clearance for County Counsel.

CURRY COUNTY CLAIM FOR PAYMENT

REC'D DEC 15 2020

Received By Finance Department

VENDOR INFORMATION:

VENDOR NUMBER: 2584

VENDOR NAME: Dooley Enterprises, Inc.

STREET ADDRESS 1198 N. Grove St. Suite A

CITY, STATE Anaheim, CA

ZIP: 92806

CONTACT NAME:

PHONE #: 714-630-6436

FAX #: 714-630-3910

DEPARTMENT: SHERIFF

PREPARED BY: DJ Storns

TITLE: Sheriff- Admin Asst

EXTENSION #: 3322

DATE: 12/14/20

AUTHORIZED BY: P McDonald

TITLE: SHERIFF

DATE: 12-15-20

Curry County Commissioner — *Date*

Curry County Treasurer — *Date*

SPECIAL HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS:

20-21

FINANCE REVIEW

Examined for accuracy, adequate documentation, appropriation, and authorized signature by:

County Accountant — Date 12/24/2020

ENTERED

DEC 22 2020

PLEASE ATTACH ORIGINAL INVOICE TO THE BACK OF THIS CLAIM ALONG WITH REMITTANCE INVOICE, STUB, OR COPY OF INVOICE TO INCLUDE WITH CHECK

TERMS:

TOTAL AMOUNT OF THIS CLAIM: √ **$10,277.49**

GENERAL LEDGER NUMBER	DESCRIPTION OF EXPENDITURE	INV DATE	INVOICE #	AMOUNT
1.28-421.20-490.00-610-00	Sheriff Rsv - SUP - Non Cap Equip - Ammo	12/11/20	59159 √	$10,277.49 √

dooley enterprises, inc.
DISTRIBUTOR
1198 N. Grove St., Suite A
Anaheim, CA 92806
714.630.6436
Fax: 714.630.3910
www.dooleyenterprises.com
E-mail: ammo@dooleyenterprises.com

WINCHESTER

****
* INVOICE *
****

Invoice #: 59159

TIN#: 95-3075070
Dooley P.O.#: DE32507

CUSTOMER ID: 000767

SOLD TO:

CURRY COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.
ATTN: PHIL MCDONALD
94235 MOORE ST STE 311
GOLD BEACH OR 97444

SHIPPED TO:

CURRY COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.
ATTN: PHIL MCDONALD
29808 COLVIN ST

GOLD BEACH OR 97444

Date	Order No.	Sales	Terms	Shipped Via	Tax
12/11/2020	PHIL MCDONALD	DG	Net 30	Reddaway	97444

Qty Ordered		Qty Shipped		Qty Back Ordered	Symbol	Description	Unit Net Price		Extended Price
17.000	M	17.000	M	0.000	USA9MM	9mm 124gr. Full Metal J	$193.00	/M	$3,281.00 ✓
3.500	M	3.500	M	0.000	RA9T	9mm 147gr. Ranger T-Ser	$299.00	/M	$1,046.50 ✓
8.000	M	8.000	M	0.000	USA223R1KY	223 55gr. Full Metal Ja	$334.00	/M	$2,672.00 ✓
2.000	M	2.000	M	0.000	RA223R2Y	223 64gr Ranger Power-	$499.00	/M	$998.00 ✓
2.500	M	2.500	M	0.000	RA40TA	40 S&W 165gr. Ranger T-	$311.00	/M	$777.50 ✓
4.000	M	4.000	M	0.000	Q4238	40 S&W 180gr. Full Meta	$239.00	/M	$956.00 ✓

Comments:

	$9,731.00	**Subtotal:**	$9,731.00 ✓
Curry	**Sales Tax @** 0.000%		$0.00
		Shipping:	546.49 ✓
		Interest:	$0.00
		Total:	**$10,277.49** ✓

DE # of Cases________ Initials________
Agency # of Cases________ Initials________
Total cases: 64
Date Rec'd______________________ HB

Rec'd By: ______________________________

COLUMBIA BANK

DEPOSIT TICKET

DATE 12-15-2020

256	50
193	00
108	00
108	00
119	50
1626	00
690	50
1496	00
2845	00
732	00
527	00
214	00
119	50
TOTAL	9817 50

DEPOSITS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL

CURRY COUNTY TREASURER
94235 MOORE ST SUITE 124
GOLD BEACH, OR 97444

UMPQUA BANK

Sheriff Admin DCOMNr

$ 9,817.50

[redacted]

12/15/2020 $9,817.50

[redacted]

Jared Gray

[redacted]

2004

DATE 12/6/20

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Curry County Sheriffs office $ 356.50

three hundred fifty six dollars 50/00 Dollars

UMPQUA BANK (866) 486-7782

FOR

Jared Gray

[redacted]

12/15/2020 2004 $356.50

[redacted]

JORDAN H WHITE
NATALIE J WHITE

[redacted]

163

DATE 12/9/2020

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Curry County Sheriff's Office $ 2845.00

two thousand, eight hundred forty-five and xx/100 DOLLARS

UMPQUA BANK (866) 486-7782

FOR

Jordan White

[redacted]

12/15/2020 163 $2,845.00

[redacted]

MAIA K MELLO

[redacted]

1495

DATE 12/7/2020

PAY TO THE ORDER OF Curry County Sheriffs ofc $ 193.00

One hundred ninety three 00/100 DOLLARS

usbank.

MEMO

Maia K. Mello

[redacted]

12/15/2020 1495 $193.00

[redacted]

MICHAEL L. LANG
WENDY S. LANG

[redacted]

8960

12/8/2020 Date

Pay to the Order of CCSO $ 108.00

One hundred eight & NO/100 Dollars

ROGUE CREDIT UNION

For Ammo -

Wendy Sheng

[redacted]

12/15/2020 8960 $108.00

[redacted]

DAVID DENNEY
SHELLEY DENNEY

[redacted]

281

12/08/2020 Date

Pay to the Order of Curry Co. Sheriff's office $ 108.00

one hundred eight and no/100 Dollars

ROGUE CREDIT UNION

For

[redacted]

12/15/2020 281 $108.00

[redacted]

JOEL HENSLEY
KATIE HENSLEY

[redacted]

2108

12/8/2020 Date

Pay to the Order of Curry County Sheriff $ 119.50

One hundred Nineteen & 50/100 Dollars

ROGUE CREDIT UNION

For AMMO

Katie Hensley

[redacted]

12/15/2020 2108 $119.50

[redacted]

JOSHUA STOUT
STEPHANIE STOUT

[redacted]

140

12/8/20 Date

Pay to the Order of Curry County Sheriffs Office $ 1626.00

One thousand Six hundred twenty Six Dollars

ROGUE CREDIT UNION

For Ammo

[redacted]

12/15/2020 140 $1,626.00

[redacted]

JOSHUA MAHLON TETER

[redacted]

500

Date 12/8/2020

Pay to the Order of Curry County Sheriff $ 732.00

Seven Hundred thirty two AND NO/100 Dollars

ROGUE CREDIT UNION

For Training Ammo

[redacted]

12/15/2020 500 $732.00

[redacted]

JOSHUA FRAME

[redacted]

1037

12/9/2020

Pay to the Order of Curry County Sheriffs office $ 690.50

Six hundred Ninety dollars and 50/100

usbank.

Ammo purchase

[redacted]

12/15/2020 1037 $690.50

[redacted]

JOHN WARD

[redacted]

5839

12-9-2020 Date

Pay to the Order of CURRY COUNTY SHERIFFS OFFICE $ 766.00

SEVEN HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX & NO/100 Dollars

ROGUE CREDIT UNION

For AMMO PURCHASE

[redacted]

12/15/2020 5839 $766.00

[redacted]

D VERSHALL & J VERSHALL

177

DATE 12/09/20

PAY TO THE ORDER OF CURRY COUNTY SHERIFF $ 690.50/100

SIX HUNDRED NINETY DOLLARS AND 50/100 DOLLARS

CHASE
JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.
www.Chase.com

MEMO Ammo

[redacted]

12/15/2020 177 $690.50

[redacted]

COLUMBIA BANK

BRAD ALCORN
JENIFER ALCORN
[redacted]

5016
11-35/1210 CA

12/9/2020 Date

Pay to the Order of CURRY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE $ 193 00

ONE HUNDRED NINETY THREE & 00/100 Dollars

BANK OF AMERICA
ACH R/T 121000358

For TRAINING AMMO

[redacted]

12/15/2020 5016 $193.00

[redacted]

DEBORAH J STORNS
JUSTIN STORNS
[redacted]

182

12/9/2020 Date

Pay to the Order of Curry County Sheriffs office $ 527.00

Five hundred twentyseven dollars and no/100 Dollars

ROGUE CREDIT UNION

For

[redacted]

12/15/2020 182 $527.00

[redacted]

ENSLEY CONSTRUCTION
[redacted]

1329

Dec. 07, 2020 date

Pay to the order of Curry County Sheriff's office $ 527.00

Five Hundred Twenty Seven & no/100 dollars

CHASE
JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A.
www.Chase.com

for

[redacted]

12/15/2020 1329 $527.00

[redacted]

Phillip McDonald
Jennifer McDonald
[redacted]

Land of the Free

21414

12-9 2020

Pay to the Order of Curry County Sheriff's office $ 216.00

Two hundred Sixteen and No/100 DOLLARS

US BANK

For

[redacted]

12/15/2020 1414 $216.00

[redacted]

JORDAN K RHODES
[redacted]

179

11/13/20 Date

Pay to the Order of CURRY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE $ 119.50

One Hundred Nineteen & 50/100 Dollars

Bank of America
ACH R/T 111000025

For Ammo

[redacted]

12/15/2020 179 $119.50

[redacted]

Receipt Number	Customer Name	GL Account	Description	Amount	Payment Type
Total 2.000037057:				3,252.25	
2.000037058	Sheriff	1.28-421.20-380.00-000-00	Sheriff's Reserve-Misc Rev-Multiple-Ammo purchase	9,817.50	DD - Strlg Ckg
Total 2.000037058:				9,817.50	
2.000037059	Sheriff	1.28-421.29-342.31-000-00	Fees-SSI Lodging-Inmate Ryan Cox	400.00	DD - Strlg Ckg
Total 2.000037059:				400.00	
2.000037060	Sheriff	1.28-421.20-364.09-000-00	Donation-Sheriff's K-9 Progran-Coos Curry Electric-Capital	117.84	DD - Strlg Ckg
Total 2.000037060:				117.84	
2.000037061	Sheriff	1.28-421.20-364.00-000-00	Criminal/Civil-Donation-Willie Chrisawn	300.00	DD - Strlg Ckg
Total 2.000037061:				300.00	
2.000037062	Sheriff	1.28-421.51-341.55-000-00	Fees-Crime Reports	40.00	DD - Strlg Ckg
Total 2.000037062:				40.00	
2.000037063	Payroll	5.01-000.00-207.17-000-00	Insurance - Medical	26.49	CK - Strlg Ckg
2.000037063	Payroll	5.01-000.00-207.16-000-00	Insurance - Life - Employee portion	1.67	CK - Strlg Ckg
Total 2.000037063:				28.16	
2.000037064	Code Enforcement	2.17-415.00-341.37-000-00	Property Registration	120.00	DD - Strlg Ckg
2.000037064	Code Enforcement	1.10-415.16-341.61-000-00	NSF Fees - Treasurer	25.00	DD - Strlg Ckg
2.000037064	Code Enforcement	2.17-415.00-341.61-000-00	NSF Fees - Code Enforcement	10.00	DD - Strlg Ckg
Total 2.000037064:				155.00	
2.000037065	Code Enforcement	2.17-415.00-380.00-000-00	Misc Revenue	920.00	DD - Strlg Ckg
Total 2.000037065:				920.00	
2.000037066	Tax Office	3.46-000.00-207.01-000-00	Pay to State-CAFFA Tier 1	391.89	DD - Unseg Tax, DD -
2.000037066	Tax Office	1.10-415.16-341.61-000-00	NSF Check Fees - Bayne	25.00	DD - Unseg Tax, DD -
2.000037066	Tax Office	3.45-000.00-205.00-000-00	Unseg Taxes	58,765.13	DD - Unseg Tax, DD -
2.000037066	Tax Office	1.10-415.15-319.11-000-00	Tax Penalties	196.00	DD - Unseg Tax, DD -
2.000037066	Tax Office	3.45-000.00-205.00-000-01	Due to Districts-Local + J&D	849.44	DD - Unseg Tax, DD -
Total 2.000037066:				60,227.46	
2.000037067	Tax Office	3.46-000.00-207.01-000-00	Pay to State-CAFFA Tier 1	247.12	DD - Unseg Tax, DD -