

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL *Illinois State Toll Highway Authority*

NOTICE OF POSTING OIG Case # IG-21-004 Respondent: Timothy Henert

Pursuant to 605 ILCS 10/8.5 (e)(3), the attached redacted Summary Report of Investigation is being posted to the Illinois Toll Highway Authority's public website. As required by law, the Office of the Inspector General for the Illinois Toll Highway Authority (OIG) sent a copy of this report to the Respondent and gave him until March 11, 2021 to provide suggested redactions or a written response. Respondent provided a response and suggested redactions, and he requested that the response be made public and his suggested redactions not be made public.

The OIG issued this Summary Report of Investigation following an investigation that established reasonable cause to find that Timothy Henert violated Tollway Policies and the Tollway Code of Ethics by using Tollway equipment during the workday to conduct personal business as well as activities related to his outside employment as an elected municipal official. The OIG recommended that the Tollway take corrective action and impose discipline as it deemed appropriate, up to and including discharge.

The Tollway agreed with the OIG findings and initiated the termination process by preparing and sending Mr. Henert a list of charges. Mr. Henert provided a written response to the Tollway, and after reviewing the information, the Tollway terminated Mr. Henert's employment. Mr. Henert grieved the discipline. In January 2022, the OIG received notification that Mr. Henert's grievance had been denied at Step 3 and that he had not submitted a request for arbitration.

As noted above, Mr. Henert submitted a response that will be included with this publication. The copy Mr. Henert provided was incomplete, and the OIG sent Mr. Henert a letter asking for a clear copy to publish, but Mr. Henert did not submit a new copy. This publication will only include the section Mr. Henert described as his public response. The letter also informed Mr. Henert that the OIG is not involved in the Tollway disciplinary process and does not control what materials the Tollway provides.



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION OIG Case # IG-21-004 Date: June 14, 2021

This report provides a summary of evidence set out in the investigative materials provided, and the Office of Inspector General's (OIG's) analysis of that evidence. An index of these investigative materials is attached.

I. <u>INTRODUCTION</u>

The Office of the Inspector General has completed an investigation of an allegation that Timothy Henert (Henert), Parts Clerk, engaged in personal business and outside employment while on the clock at his work site at M-12.

OIG's investigation has established reasonable cause to find that Henert used Tollway equipment including his work computer, office supplies, and desk telephone to conduct personal business and activities related to his position as Village President¹ of **Sector** Illinois while at work. Photographs taken of Henert's workspace and computer screen reflect non-Tollway activity using Tollway resources, and Tollway records reveal that Henert made numerous non-Tollway calls using his Tollway telephone. In fact, Henert admitted to OIG Investigators that he made personal and outside employment related phone calls on his Tollway desk phone, and admitted to bringing a voters list from his home that he typed into a Word document on his Tollway computer. Henert did all of this within the first month of his employment as a Parts Clerk.

Henert's actions violated Tollway Policies and the Tollway Code of Ethics² and the OIG recommends that the Tollway take corrective action and impose discipline as it deems appropriate up to and including discharge.

II. <u>APPLICABLE RULES, REGULATIONS, LAW</u>

A. Illinois Tollway Policy and Procedure Manual Chapter VII. Employee Conduct and Discipline:

Section A. "Employee Conduct" provides in relevant part:

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, the Tollway expects employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of both the employees and the organization. Violations of the rules of conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. The rules of conduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

¹ Public records reflect that the official title is Village President, but Henert has used the title Mayor to describe his position, and these terms will be used interchangeably throughout this report. ² Some of Henert's actions related to his campaign for Village President that likely violated the State Ethics Act ban

² Some of Henert's actions related to his campaign for Village President that likely violated the State Ethics Act ban on political activity, and this matter is being referred to the Office of the Executive Inspector General, which has jurisdiction over Ethics Act violations, to review for possible action.

- Unauthorized personal use of telephones, mail system, or other Tollway equipment.
- Conducting outside employment during work hours.
- Violation of Tollway Code of Ethics, or other Official laws (i.e., Illinois State Officials and Employees Ethics Act. Gift Ban Act, etc.)
- Unauthorized personnel on job site

B. Code of Ethics for the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority

Section II Employee Ethics, EMPLOYEE SECONDARY/OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

An employee may accept secondary employment so long as such employment is not in conflict with the employee's responsibilities to the Tollway, or will not interfere with the employee's official duties during normal working hours. An employee engaged in such employment is prohibited from conducting any business or performing any duties, including solicitation, related to such employment on Tollway premises or during the employee's normal working hours for the Tollway. The employee is also prohibited from any outside business use of any Tollway-owned or leased materials, equipment, programs, or facilities.

C. State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/1-5: Definitions

Provides in relevant part:

"Prohibited Political Activity"

(5) Surveying or gathering information from potential or actual voters in an election to determine probable vote outcome in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes of for or against nay referendum question.

(11) Distributing, preparing for distribution, or mailing campaign literature, campaign signs, or other campaign material on behalf of any candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.

(13) Managing or working on a campaign for elective officer or for or against any referendum question.

D. State Officials and Employees Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 430/5-15: "Prohibited Political Activity"

Provides in in relevant part:

(a) State employees shall not intentionally perform any prohibited political activity during any compensated time (other than vacation, personal, or compensatory time off). State employees shall not intentionally misappropriate any State property or resource by engaging in any prohibited political activity for the benefit of any campaign for elective officer of any political organization.

III. BACKGROUND

A. Subject

1. Timothy Henert, Parts Clerk

Henert is a Parts Clerk assigned to maintenance garage 12 (M-12) in Dixon, Illinois. Tollway records reflect that Henert began working as a Toll Collector in 2012. His first day as a Parts Clerk was February 8, 2021. Kronos records show that his scheduled hours are 7:00 am to 3:00 pm. Public records reflect that Henert was re-elected as President of the April 6, 2021, a position in which he has served since April 6, 2017.³

IV. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

A. Documents

1. Outside Employment Disclosure Form

OIG obtained an Outside Employment Disclosure Form submitted by Henert on June 26, 2020. Henert reported his outside employment as "Weige President" and explained "I am responsible for all the duties that are involved in being a Village President in the state of Illinois. I do not have a set schedule I set my own hours when I have personal time available. It has not or does not interfere with my position at the ISTHA". By signing the form, Henert certified "I affirm that my above-described employment/elected or appointed position outside the Illinois Tollway will not create any conflict of interest. nor will it interfere with my current Illinois Tollway responsibilities. including those surrounding my availability for emergency weekend and/or after-hours call-outs and that any interference with my regular or call-out duties will be grounds for disciplinary action".

The form was signed by the and approval of Henert's outside work.

2. Photographs

OIG was provided 6 photographs of Henert's work station and Tollway computer taken on March 1, 2021 by Manager Manager

³ See generally http://www /phone.htm and

https://www.//DocumentCenter/View/2074/01Final-Official-SOVC040621 (last accessed June 7, 2021).

on Henert's computer.⁴ In addition, photos show a notepad with notes in Henert's handwriting listing actions such as: "review voters list", "work on mailer" and "game plan."

3. Phone Records

Tollway records reflect that from February 8, 2021 to March 3, 2021, Henert worked 16 days and made approximately 36 phone calls to non-Tollway telephone numbers. In total, these calls lasted a combined 2 hours and 27 minutes. 28 of the calls made to non-Tollway numbers included calls made to Henert's family, medical centers, the parts department at a solution, along with other personal phone calls⁵.

, along with other personal phone calls^{*}.

The remaining 8 calls were made to phone numbers. Those calls are listed in the following chart.

Date	Phone Number	Location	Call Time	Call Length
February 18, 2021	815-453-	Village of	1:28pm	4 minutes 42
		Mayor's Office		seconds
February 22, 2021	815-453-	Village of	9:19am	8 minutes 6
		Mayor's Office	Construction of the second secon	seconds
February 23, 2021	815-453-	Village of	1:53pm	3 minutes 23
		Mayor's Office		seconds
February 24, 2021	815-453-	Village of	8:02am	7 minutes 10
		Mayor's Office		seconds
February 25, 2021	815-453-	Village of	12:19pm	2 minutes 48
		Mayor's Office		seconds
March 01, 2021	815-453-	Village of	9:16am	5 minutes
		Mayor's Office		
March 02, 2021	815-453-	Superintendent of	9:01am	44 seconds
		School District		
	3 2-16 16(2)			
March 03, 2021	815-453-	Village of	11:45am	7 minutes 27
10% -		Mayor's Office		seconds

4. Policy and Procedure Acknowledgment, Disclaimer and Receipt Form

OIG obtained a Policy and Procedure Acknowledgment, Disclaimer and Receipt Form signed by Henert on October 8, 2016. The last line of the document provides: "I acknowledge it is my responsibility to read and understand the contents of this manual"

⁵ Three of the non-Tollway numbers appear to possibly be work related. These include calls made to free, in Hampshire II, and in Elmhurst II.

toll

⁴ During a search of Henert's Tollway computer completed on March 11, 2021 by Tollway IT, no documents reflecting these screenshots were located on Henert's Tollway computer or email.

5. OneNet Training History

OIG obtained a print out of Henert's training record in OneNet⁶ that reflects that Henert has completed various online trainings since 2018. The following ethics related training was found:

- Ethics Training Program for State Employees and Appointees 2021 completed on April 2, 2021.
- 2020 Tollway Ethics Training completed on October 14, 2020.
- Ethics Training Program for State Employees and Appointees 2020 completed on April 3, 2020.
- Ethics Training for State Employees 2019 completed on June 12, 2019.

Each of these trainings included sections discussing the prohibition on political activity in the state workplace.

6. Henert Narrative

Henert provided OIG investigators with a copy of a narrative account of his time at M-12 dated March 4 that he drafted and sent to himself via email after his supervisors spoke with him on March 3 about their observations of his non-Tollway activity while on duty.⁷ The narrative included claims of adverse side effects from having COVID and the difficulties he has had since recovering from the virus. Henert explained that he is the Mayor of a person town and claimed that he was not actively working on his campaign because he "[a]ccidentally grabbed the wrong paperwork off of my home desk. Had some downtime thought I would practice computer skills i.e. word excel typing etc." Henert wrote about his belief that his managers, and were trying to "move up" and that another employee who is close wanted the Parts Clerk position. Henert concluded that, after reviewing the state to

ethics training, he now understood how his actions could have been construed.

7. Tollway Disciplinary Records

A review of Henert's personnel file revealed that during his Tollway tenure he has served suspensions for violations of the Toll Collector cell-phone use policy in 2016 and 2018.

B. Interviews

1.

On March 15, 2021, OIG spoke via telephone with Manager, to follow up on emails and photographs provided to the OIG related to Henert.

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⁷ Sent from t a .com to t

⁶ OneNet.Illinois.gov: OneNet is Illinois' home for information about web accessibility, as well as a launch pad for public-facing online trainings. com

confirmed that on March 1, 2021 took the photographs of Henert's desk and computer that were provided to the OIG. According to these images were taken because of their concern that Henert was performing political work on office time. The images were taken when Henert walked away from his desk. If and the believed that Henert had performed the political work displayed in the images during work hours and not on break. If told the OIG that was concerned that when Henert was confronted about his non-Tollway, campaign-related work on Tollway time, Henert allegedly stated words to the effect of "Maintenance must do things differently than toll collection." If thought that Henert may be aware of the photographs that were taken.

2.

a. Telephone Interview, March 15, 2021

On March 15, 2021, OIG spoke via telephone to Supervisor , about Henert. The following is a summary of the conversation:

acknowledged that took the photographs of Henert's desk and computer that were later provided to the OIG. was first alerted to the possibility Henert was conducting outside employment when coverheard Henert having conversations on the Tollway work phone that included discussions of non-Tollway matters related to Henert's personal business or outside employment. In addition, cover recounted an instance where an cover Public Works truck came to the M-12 garage to pick up a credit card from Henert.

said after advised supervisors about observations, they instructed to to have a discussion with Henert about not working his outside job while on the clock at the Tollway. Since that conversation on March 3, 2021, has observed Henert conducting his outside employment work on his lunch break or other breaks using his personal cell phone.

b. Telephone Interview, May 28, 2021

On May 28, 2021, OIG spoke again via telephone with about this matter.

When asked if a knew or had been told about Henert's claimed COVID-related difficulties, said that Henert mentioned that he had COVID prior to starting his position as Parts Clerk at M-12, but never told are to that he had COVID fog or any other complications due to COVID. The did not give Henert any instructions to work on Microsoft Word or Excel, and did not recall hearing anyone instructing Henert to do so. The was the one who was training him on the Parts Clerk position for about 4-6 weeks, so any instructions would have been given by **D**.

3. <u>Timothy Henert</u>

On April 28, 2021, OIG investigators interviewed Henert via Webex; , Union Representative, was present for the interview. Henert was provided both orally and in writing, Administrative Advisements for Union Employees which he signed and acknowledged

understanding. Henert did not consent to audio and video record the interview. In summary, Henert provided the following information:

Henert has worked for the Illinois Tollway for 9 years. He started as a Toll Collector in 2012 and has been a Parts Clerk since February 8, 2021. His work hours are from 7am to 3pm, and he takes a 15-minute break in the morning, 30-minute lunch around 11am and a 15-minute break in the afternoon. His job duties are to process repair orders, provide and track down parts, and make phone calls to Tollway maintenance sites and Tollway Parts Clerks. He said that he is new to the position and still learning. He reports to Manager, although he was not certain when he was first hired who his direct report was.

Henert admitted using the Tollway desk phone for work and personal use. Henert claimed to spend most of his time on the phone with a Parts Clerk in Rockford. He acknowledged that he made personal calls on his Tollway telephone to his mother and calls to Village of employees to check on them. He recalled that one time he received a phone call on his personal cell phone from an Village employee, and he directed the employee to drive on to Tollway property at M-12 to get a credit card from Henert for Village business. Henert could not recall when this incident occurred, although he acknowledged that he had not Village employee to come to M-12, and he realized now obtained approval to allow the that he used poor judgment. Henert has a personal cellular phone that he keeps with him, but he didn't use it, he used his Tollway desk phone instead because he was "not thinking" and "spaced out."

Henert said that he contracted COVID in January 2021, and he claimed that he had "COVID fog," which affected his motor skills and caused memory issues. Prior to starting as a Parts Clerk, Henert said that he had worked from home between March 15, 2020 and February 5, 2021 as a Toll Collector.

Henert confirmed that he was first elected in April of 2017 as the Mayor of Illinois and that he had been re-elected on April 6, 2021. Henert described his Mayoral responsibilities as consisting of managing the town/village, serving on the school and the village boards, and serving as the police commissioner. According to Henert, "not much" went into his campaign due to his town being very small. He said he just had to show up to meetings and talk to people, because his name carried his campaign. However, Henert said that part of his campaign included reviewing voters lists to see "who is registered to vote, who votes, and who needs to be talked to." Henert admitted that he brought a handwritten voters list with him to the Tollway from home and that he reviewed the voters list and typed the names from that list into a Word document on his Tollway computer. Henert claimed he did this to help his typing skills and his recovery from COVID, and believed he did so on break but was "not sure." He denied actively working on his campaign while on Tollway property or on the clock, and did "not recall" completing the same activities when he was working a Toll Collector during his first campaign in 2017. Henert denied soliciting Tollway employees to assist with his campaign and said he never received any monetary contributions from Tollway employees for campaign purposes. Henert stated that there was no need for a campaign fund because is so small.

Henert admitted receiving the Illinois Tollway Policy and Procedure Manual both when he started in 2012 and the updated version in 2016. He acknowledged completing state Ethics Training on April 2, 2021 and noted this was 30 days after the incident. But he also conceded that he had completed similar state Ethics training in 2019 and 2020 as well, but said that, although he reviewed the materials at the time, he did not remember the details. Henert told the OIG that he did not know that his actions violated the Tollway's policies and procedures at the time, but he understood that now.

Henert confirmed that he signed the receipt for the Tollway Policy and Procedures Manual and acknowledged that it includes a provision that, "It is my responsibility to read and understand the contents of this manual". He admitted that was his responsibility, but opined that "everyone slips up" and said he doesn't always remember and forgets some of the ethics training. When told his actions may have violated the state Ethics Act, he said, "that makes 100% sense," but called his actions "a mistake," and stated that it would cause hardship to his family if he lost his job.

Henert stated that his job as Mayor had never gotten in the way of his Tollway job. He also claimed that he is not comfortable at work and he felt like he was being targeted. He said he did not know the people at his job very well, but believed that

Supervisor , is trying to be promoted and reported Henert to . Henert also believed that a custodian at M12 who wanted the Parts Clerk position now filled by Henert is good friends with .

4.

On May 28, 2021, OIG spoke via telephone with Supervisor in Dixon Illinois regarding Henert. The following is a summary of the conversation:

said that is had heard from other clerks that Henert had contracted COVID before he started at M-12, but was not aware that Henert had any medical complications from that diagnosis. If was not aware if Henert had been instructed to practice with Microsoft Word or Excel. If was not aware if Henert had been instructed to practice with Microsoft Word or Excel. If was assigned to train Henert on the day-to-day work of the Parts Clerk. If a said that it appears that since Henert was talked to by M-12 management in March of 2021, he has stopped conducting non-Tollway business while at work.

5.

On June 1, 2021, OIG spoke via telephone to regarding Henert. In summary made the following statements:

When Henert started his position as Parts Clerk, which oversaw his training. So and said that learned that Henert had contracted COVID at some point prior to starting at M-12, and subsequently had breathing problems that required the use of an inhaler, and was aware he was seeing a doctor for follow up. The said was added did not observe and Henert did not tell that he had other side effects or any issues with memory, cognitive skills or any other functions. So and that it seemed Henert was learning his duties and was "working pretty well."

According to shortly after he was spoken to by M-12 management, Henert told he "got in trouble." He showed a document on his Tollway computer with a list of people's names, and asked the "is there any way you can delete this?" When the asked him why he had done this, he responded with words to the effect the "well you were busy." It took that statement as a was not training him at the moment, so he decided to do something else. It acknowledged that had no own job responsibilities to complete during the time was training Henert, so he had some downtime and was not supervised. If the explained Henert did not have full access to all programs that at that time because he was still being set up.

A second asserted that the never gave Henert any instructions to work on his typing skills or Microsoft Word skills. I had the impression that after managers spoke with Henert, he stopped conducting personal business or outside employment on Tollway time.

V. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This investigation has established reasonable cause to find that Henert violated Tollway policy, the Tollway Code of Ethics, and likely the Illinois Ethics Act,⁸ when he repeatedly conducted outside employment related to his role as Village President of IL. Records reflect that Henert's outside activities took place during his Tollway shift while using Tollway resources. These non-Tollway activities began almost as soon as he started his new position and continued regularly until his supervisors spoke to him on March 3. Notably, this activity as reflected in handwritten notes found on his desk included campaign work in advance of the April 6 election, such as strategizing, preparing for events, and reviewing voter's lists, which he typed into a document on his Tollway computer.

Evidence, including photographs taken by Henert's supervisor show handwritten voters lists, notes unrelated to his Tollway work, and electronic documents of non-Tollway matters that he created using his Tollway computer. In addition, telephone records reflect numerous non-Tollway related telephone calls made during his work hours to village personnel. It is particularly alarming that in the first 16 days of his tenure as a Parts Clerk, Henert made personal or outside business calls on his Tollway telephone totaling 2 hours and 27 minutes.

In his OIG interview Henert admitted that he used his Tollway phone to make calls to the Village of to "check in" as well as to make other personal calls. Henert also acknowledged that he brought and worked on campaign-related materials at his Tollway work station. Henert told his trainer he worked on the campaign-related materials because was busy completing job duties and not actively training him. Henert stated that he brought the campaign-related materials in on accident. Henert claimed he did not know at the time that he his actions violated policy and law, but said he now understands what he has done was wrong. He also acknowledged directing an employee to come to M12 without authorization from his supervisors. Although he claims he either did not realize it was wrong or was otherwise mistaken are not credible given his nine-year tenure with the Tollway and multiple ethics act trainings.

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Henert also claimed that "COVID fog" and other COVID-related complications contributed to his actions. But Henert's claims regarding post-COVID difficulties do not excuse his actions. Henert claimed he "spaced out" and used his Tollway phone to make business calls instead of his personal cellphone, but the Tollway Code of Ethics clearly prohibits the conducting of outside employment regardless of the instrument while in Tollway facilities and during Tollway work hours.

Furthermore, Henert's supervisors and trainer told the OIG that they never knew Henert experienced cognitive issues related to COVID, never authorized him to conduct personal and outside business during his Tollway shift, and never knew or authorized Henert to use Tollway equipment for personal or outside employment purposes.

Notably, Henert's explanations for the actions he acknowledges have not been consistent. When first confronted by his supervisors, Henert commented that this department must be different than Toll Operations in restricting his personal and outside activities (despite having been disciplined several times as a Toll Collector for phone usage); then he said he did not know that such non-Tollway work was wrong (despite completing several Ethics Training sessions during his career); and then he blamed his actions on adverse effects of COVID (but his supervisors were unaware of any claimed cognitive difficulties).

Finally, it is troubling that Henert asked his trainer how to delete non-Tollway Word documents he had created and did not discuss it with his supervisors or inform them that he was doing so. It appears that Henert took it upon himself to delete these records because, when his computer was later searched by IT, the non-Tollway word documents displayed in the photographs were not located, although Henert admitted to the OIG that he had created such documents.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

This investigation establishes reasonable cause to find that Henert violated Tollway Policies and Procedures and the Tollway Code of Ethics by performing personal business and outside employment using Tollway equipment during the work day. The OIG recommends that the Tollway take corrective action and impose discipline as it deems appropriate up to and including discharge.



OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL *Illinois State Toll Highway Authority*

> NOTICE OF POSTING OIG Case # IG-21-004 Respondent: Timothy Henert

RESPONSE

Mar/11/2022 5:45:04 PM	Central Bank	1/12
Tillinois Tollway	OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL Illinois State Toll Highway Authority Theodor J. Hengesbach –Inspector General	P6 10F12
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Date, February 25, 2022

RESPONDENT'S SUGGESTIONS FOR REDACTION/PUBLIC RESPONSE

Re: Timothy Henert

OIG Case # IG-21-004

Please check the appropriate line and sign and date below. If no line is checked the Office of Inspector General will not make your response public when the redacted report is made public.

_____ Below is my public response. Please make this response public when the summary report is made public; or

Below are my suggestions for redaction. I do not wish for these suggestions to be made public.

Respondent's Signature

3/10/22

Instructions: Please write or type suggestions for redaction or a public response on the lines below. If you prefer, you may attach separate documents to this form.

SEE ASTACHED

Return this form and any attachments by March 11, 2022.

to:

Office of the Inspector General Illinois State Toll Highway Authority 2700 Ogden Avenue Downers Grove, IL 60515

Or fax documents to fax number 630-795-7661

2700 Ogden Avenus | Downers Grove, IL 60515 | p. 630.241.6800 Ext. 1300 | f. 630.795.7661 OIG Hotline 866.786.5544

3/10/2022

Office of the Inspector General

In regard to OIG Case # IG-21-004 I would like to suggest that the following be redacted:

This request is based on the following:



The following is my public response:

The OIG findings in this investigation are blased and incomplete. At the time this report is being made public the OIG findings have not been through the arbitration process nor the legal wrongful termination process in which I highly anticipate the OIG finding to be revised and or retracted based on a more complete investigation and the unwavering truth of my side of the story coming to light.

Tim Henert