

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**STATEWIDE POLICE GROUP ISSUES STATEMENT ON
BEHALF OF FORMER SUN PRAIRIE OFFICER MATTHEW MCELROY**

(MADISON, Wis.) – Following the City of Sun Prairie’s release of records relating to the resignation of former police officer Matthew McElroy, Jim Palmer, the executive director of the Wisconsin’s largest police group and the union that represented McElroy, issued the following statement:

When Matt became an officer five years ago, he fulfilled a lifelong ambition to serve the public. In the years that followed, he was not only served on the Sun Prairie Police Department’s mental health team, gang team, K9 team, field training team, and drug strategy team, but he was also an active member and participant of community outreach efforts to strengthen the relationship between law enforcement officers and the community they serve. By all accounts, including his annual evaluations, Matt was a hard-working officer, and one dedicated to protecting and serving the community with the respect, honesty, and integrity that every citizen deserves. In fact, he was never disciplined a single time in his five years with the department.

Despite his noble intentions, Matt recognizes that he used very poor judgment when, on four separate days in 2016, instead of ticketing motorists for traffic offenses which carried heavier fines, he opted to issue seatbelt citations to motorists that were, in fact, wearing their seatbelts. In each case, Matt stopped the drivers for legitimate traffic violations. However, Matt offered these motorists a choice of a seatbelt ticket as a lesser option, believing he was giving each person a “break” and saving them money, points and increased insurance costs. Upon reflection, Matt realized that although his actions were well-intentioned, they were wrong. For this reason, Matt self-reported his mistakes to his superiors on his own accord in August of last year, months prior to any complaint being filed. Matt was not “caught writing bogus tickets” as has been inaccurately reported in the media, nor did his resignation require any confidentiality on the part of anyone. Throughout this entire matter, Matt was completely open and honest about the mistakes that he made. He brought his actions to the attention of his command staff, he was entirely forthright and cooperative during the investigation into his conduct, and he has accepted the consequences.

While Matt is disappointed beyond words that his actions will prevent him from serving as a law enforcement officer ever again, the notion that this event might define him as a person is devastating to him. For anyone interested enough to review his entire personnel file, they will see a man that was dedicated to serving others. As sorry as he is that his days as an officer are over, Matt monumentally regrets that he let his department and his community down.

While the loss of his boyhood dream has come to an end, Matt is tremendously grateful for the five years that he proudly served the Sun Prairie Police Department, and he wishes to thank the citizens of Sun Prairie for giving him the opportunity to serve an amazing community.

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