MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION
P.O. Box 1254
Jefferson City, MO 65102
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(573) 751-2020 / (800) 392-8660

James Klahr
Executive Director

December 15, 2014

Steve Korte
Business Hwy 54 West
Bowling Green MO 63334

MEC No. 14E245

Dear Mr. Korte:

The Missouri Ethics Commission considered the complaint filed against you at its December 12, 2014 meeting. The complaint's primary allegation is that you allowed your officers to transport their children to and from school in county provided patrol vehicles. Section 49.276, RSMo, provides in relevant part: "County commissions of third and fourth class counties may provide motor vehicles for the use of law enforcement personnel who are county employees. Such motor vehicles shall be used by authorized personnel only, and each sheriff shall prescribe rules and regulations for the use of the motor vehicles..."

The Commission finds no reasonable grounds exist to support a violation of Chapter 49.276, RSMo, and is dismissing the complaint. Staff interviews and documentation establish that while the statute limits use of county vehicles, including sheriff vehicles, to those "authorized personnel", neither the statute nor county policies provide specific language to prohibit the use of sheriff vehicles by sheriff's deputies, when the other use is insignificant, for a purpose other than law enforcement activities. Moreover, you has now adopted a new policy on vehicle use that prohibits any non-official use of the vehicles.

The complaint also alleged that you failed to follow other county regulations, including failure to timely pay property taxes, failure to repay a loan through a county loan program, and asked the county treasurer to deposit funds into the Inmate Security Fund without authorization. The Commission staff reviewed these allegations and determined that none of these fall within the Commission's jurisdiction.

Sincerely,

James Klahr
Executive Director