



OEIG Investigation No.: 24-0001

Subject(s) Name(s): Lumina S. Buss, Skyler E. Collins, Serenity J. Hubal, Thomas M. Lampe, Carly D. Piland, Elise D. Willow, and Marzipan Eyrie

Investigative Summary Report Publication

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE INSPECTOR GENERAL

FOR THE ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

SUMMARY REPORT

OEIG Case Number: 24-0001
Date of Report: October 8, 2024

Subjects of the Investigation

1. **Buss, Lumina S.**, [Redacted], Computer Production Specialist-Information Technology
2. **Collins, Skyler E.**, [Redacted], Operations Associate-Driver Services
3. **Hubal, Serenity J.**, [Redacted], Information Systems Specialist I-Information Technology
4. **Lampe, Thomas M.**, [Redacted], Operations Associate-Administrative Hearings
5. **Piland, Carly D.**, [Redacted], Operations Associate-Administrative Hearings
6. **Willow, Elise D.**, [Redacted], Office Operations Supervisor-Administrative Hearings
7. **Eyrie, Marzipan**, [Redacted], Operations Associate-Driver Services, Resigned: August 16, 2024
8. **[SOS Employee 1]**, [Redacted], [Redacted] Resigned: [Redacted]
9. **[SOS Employee 2]**, [Redacted], [Redacted], Resigned: [Redacted]

This summary report is issued in compliance with 5 ILCS 430/20-50(a) of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act.

The Office of Executive Inspector General (“OEIG”) received a complaint on January 16, 2024, alleging that Microsoft Teams chat was being used by Lumina Buss, Serenity Hubal, and Elise Willow, to have inappropriate conversations, including chats sexual in nature. It was also alleged that Lumina Buss provided salary information from the non-public SOS database to employees in the Teams chat. On April 10, 2024, the OEIG received another complaint alleging that after Lumina Buss’s request for a stamp was denied, she created and ordered an SOS stamp using the State Seal for her personal use at work. That complaint was incorporated into existing case since Buss was already a subject of an investigation.

During its investigation, the OEIG also discovered that there were other active participants regularly involved in the Teams chats who were identified as Skylar Collins, Thomas Lampe, Carly Piland, Marzipan Eyrie, [SOS Employee 1], and [SOS Employee 2], which the OEIG included as additional subjects in this investigation.

Summary of the Investigation

In its investigation, the OEIG obtained and reviewed Teams messages for an approximate two-week period from December 18, 2023 to January 9, 2024, and completed a time analysis for the time the subjects spent engaging in “chats” during that time period. The OEIG also reviewed witness statements and interviewed [SOS Employee 3] and [SOS Employee 4].

On August 8, 2024, the OEIG interviewed subjects Lumina Buss, Thomas Lampe, Sklyar Collins, Carly Piland. On August 9, 2024, the OEIG interviewed subjects Marzipan Eyrie, Serenity Hubal, and Elise Willows all at Howlett Building located at 501 S. 2nd St., 5th floor, Springfield, IL.

Each of the above-named subjects admitted to using Teams for personal communications, and Hubal and Lampe both apologized for having used Teams in that manner. In addition, Buss also admitted to having provided salary information to some of the Teams group members and to having ordered and used an SOS stamp with the State Seal without authorization.

The OEIG did not interview [SOS Employee 1] and [SOS Employee 2] as both had resigned prior to the interviews.

Based on the evidence gathered, the OEIG concluded that each of the subjects identified above violated the Illinois Secretary of State Computer Use policy 7.2 for using Teams chat for personal communication, and that Lumina Buss additionally violated the SOS confidentiality policy 1.7 for providing salary information to chat group members and the SOS Code of Conduct policy 1.1.5 for designing and using a stamp for SOS business without authorization.

The OEIG’s legal analysis is based on the Illinois State law and the Secretary of State’s Policy Manual.

I. Background

The subjects of this investigation worked in different SOS departments in Springfield, IL, and self-identified as members of the [Redacted] ([Redacted] and [Redacted]) community. These employees used Teams chat to communicate and engage in personal conversations with one another, and Lumina Buss provided salary information to some of the group members, which was beyond the scope of her duties.

The OEIG reviewed Teams messages for December 19, 2023, December 29, 2023, December 30, 2023, January 2, 2024, January 3, 2024, January 5, 2024, and January 9, 2024.

II. The Investigation

A. [SOS Employee 3] Interview

On April 10, 2024, the OEIG spoke with [SOS Employee 3], [Redacted], regarding Lumina Buss having ordered and used an IL SOS stamp in lieu of using peel and stick address labels at work.

[SOS Employee 3] stated that after Buss requested a stamp and was denied, Buss took it upon herself to order an SOS official stamp in October 2023. She said that [SOS Employee 4], Buss's supervisor, provided a written statement that after considering Buss's request for a stamp, he told her that he was not going to ask for a stamp and that using the stickers was fine. When it was discovered that Buss was using a stamper, it was taken away from her and sent to [SOS Employee 3], which she said she still has in her possession.

B. [SOS Employee 4] Interview

On September 19, 2024, the OEIG spoke with [SOS Employee 4], [Redacted], who confirmed that he supervises Lumina Buss. [SOS Employee 4] stated that he provided the written statement confirmed shown below:

On 10/5/23 Lumina asked me if I could get her a stamp instead of using stickers for the return address. After considering it, I decided not to ask personnel for a stamp, and on 10/19/23 I told Lumina that I wasn't going to ask for a stamp, using stickers for the return address was fine.

In late November I was told that Lumina had gotten a sticker made on her own.



[SOS Employee 4] recalled that when Buss asked him for the stamp, she said it had something to do with carpal tunnel and that using a stamp was easier than peeling stickers. [SOS Employee 4] said that after he said he was not going to ask for a stamp, Buss did not ask for a reasonable accommodation and did mention either the stamp or carpal tunnel again. He said that Buss did not mention any discomfort regarding her wrists, and that to his recollection, she had not taken any time for carpal tunnel related issues.

[SOS Employee 4] said that when he denied her request, Buss said it was fine. [SOS Employee 4] said that he found out that Buss had ordered a stamp when someone from Personnel told him about it. He said he believed that Buss was asked to turn it over to someone in Personnel and that she did.

[SOS Employee 4] said that his department uses stickers as return labels for things they send to different internal department, and that his night crew prints out a two-week supply of the stickers and places them on the desks. In the mornings, Buss would print forms, letters, statistics, and interoffice things, place the stickers on the envelopes as return labels and would deliver it to different departments. [SOS Employee 4] said that they have a new employee who does that now, but that Buss may still do it as well.

C. TIME ANALYSIS

The OEIG reviewed the dates and times each of the messages in the Teams chats was sent or responded to and completed an analysis of the amount of time the group spent messaging one another.

The OEIG assigned one minute to each message sent within that minute. As shown in the example below, if a message was sent at 3:08 p.m., that message was counted as one minute. If its response was sent at 3:19 p.m., the response was counted as one minute. In the same example, if there was

a response or multiple responses to the 3:08 p.m. message within that same minute, all of those would be counted as one minute; and if the messages continued uninterrupted for several minutes, e.g., 3:19 p.m. to 3:21 p.m., the total string would be assigned as two minutes regardless of how many exchanges occurred within a given minute.

Lumina Buss	1/3/2024	"This conversation has made me realize my DL expires this year."	EW, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, &CP	3:08 PM	0:01
Skyler Collins	1/3/2024	"yo samesies"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, ME, &CP	3:19 PM	
Elise Willow	1/3/2024	"mine might aswell"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, &CP	3:19 PM	
Skyler Collins	1/3/2024	"hmmm coworker is wearing a trans colored tartan shirt"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, ME, &CP	3:19 PM	
Elise Willow	1/3/2024	"tartan? who is that?"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, &CP	3:20 PM	
Elise Willow	1/3/2024		LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, &CP	3:20 PM	
Marzipan Eyrie	1/3/2024	"that's the guy taylor swift is dating right /j"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, &CP	3:21 PM	0:02

Based on that valuation, the OEIG estimates that for December 19, 2023, December 29, 2023, December 30, 2023, January 2, 2024, January 3, 2024, January 5, 2024, and January 9, 2024, the group spent 7 hours and 19 minutes sending messages through the Teams chat.

A summary of the time analysis completed and all the Teams messages reviewed are attached to this report as Addendum 1 and Addendum 2.

III. Subject Interviews

The OEIG provided each of the subjects with their administrative rights, and they all read, signed and dated their Administrative Rights forms. Each of the subjects also consented to the recording of their interviews and read, signed and dated the Consent to Record form. Union representative [Individual 1] represented Lumina Buss, Skylar Collins, and Marzipan Eyrie, and union representative [Individual 2] represented Thomas Lampe, Carly Piland, and Elise Willow to the interview. Serenity Hubal declined to have union representation and signed a union waiver form.

A. Lumina Buss

Buss has worked as a Computer Production Specialist I since October 3, 2022. She outlined her job duties as sorting "output from the mainframe," running jobs based on email requests, handling calls from programmers seeking help with "JCL" (Job Control Language), running database fixes throughout the day, and preparing reports. Buss said that her supervisor is [SOS Employee 4], [Redacted].

a. Teams Messages

Buss said that she frequently uses Microsoft Teams for work to communicate with other departments, and that "people don't call very much in our office." Buss admitted to using Teams for personal conversations with her colleagues. Of those colleagues, Buss stated that she currently lived with Skylar Collins and Elise Willow.

The OEIG showed Buss Teams messages that included personal conversations involving Buss, Hubal, Willow, Collins, Piland, Eyrie, and [SOS Employee 1] and [SOS Employee 2] (two former

SOS employees), and she confirmed that she recognized the messages.

Buss explained that the group used Teams for communication because they have an [Redacted] support group set up on Teams, and the chats the OEIG showed her were part of this support group. Buss stated that the group is not officially sanctioned by SOS and that she is unsure who originally created it. Buss was not certain who started the group, but later stated that it was Willow who added her to the Teams group. Buss also stated that she did not personally know everyone that had been included in the group.

Buss stated that she used her cell phone to communicate with her friends but chose to use the Teams group for communication because she was added to it. Buss said that she began to feel somewhat uncomfortable with certain remarks in the messages and stated, "people talk about a lot of things because they're frustrated or whatever, and it might make me uncomfortable, but I'm not gonna say anything." Buss said that she did not consider using Teams for personal conversation to be a "big deal" as the platform was already in regular use for work-related communication.

Regarding a Teams group conversation on January 5, 2024, about moving items on a colleague's desk, Buss explained that the group often joked about pranking other colleagues, but they were not serious about it.

The OEIG then showed Buss Teams messages that were solely between her and Willow. After reviewing the messages, Buss stated that she used to date Willow, which is why some of the messages include phrases like, "I love you." A few examples of the Teams messages between Buss and Willow are shown below:

December 18, 2023

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	12/18/2023	"I would wiggle closer to you, snuggling in tight to my tiger"	Lumina Buss	1:12 PM
Lumina Buss	12/18/2023	"I could really use that right now"	Elise Willow	1:12 PM
Elise Willow	12/18/2023	"I fucking love you"	Lumina Buss	1:36 PM
Lumina Buss	12/18/2023	"I love you too"	Elise Willow	1:37 PM

December 28, 2023

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	12/28/2023	"and also mentioned that there is a difference between wanting to be spanked as a punishment and just desiring to take pain as a way to be like "Look im so good, I can take so much for you" and I think im in the latter section"	Lumina Buss	3:33 PM
Lumina Buss	12/28/2023	"Interesting, I dunno why I expected more of an overlap. Awe~you really do just want to be my good girl."	Elise Willow	3:36 PM

January 4, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"Gods, I was thinking about us holding each other yesterday and it made me shiver with delight"	Lumina Buss	10:41 AM
Lumina Buss	1/4/2024	" ^ _ ^ the most sapphic"	Elise Willow	10:42 AM

Buss explained that she and Willow used Teams instead of text messages because Willow began messaging her there. She said that at one point they had discussed what to say over Teams but eventually stopped caring about it. Buss then corrected herself to say that they did not have a conversation about what to say over Teams but stated that they probably should have.

b. Salary Information

The OEIG showed Buss Teams chat related to salary information, which are shown below.

January 5, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Lumina Buss	1/5/2024	"WILLOW ELISE D [REDACTED] K0300 \$3,770.00 03/00 3.00 PERCENT NEGOTIATED IN"	Elise Willow	3:58 PM
Elise Willow	1/5/2024	"oooooh"	Lumina Buss	4:02 PM

January 5, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Lumina Buss	1/5/2024	"oh btw does anyone want their monthly salary given to them after the 3% increase we got for the new year?"	EW, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:00 PM
Lumina Buss	1/5/2024	"You can calculate it yourself but I have the files open"	EW, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:00 PM
[SOS Employee 2]	1/5/2024	"yes please"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:01 PM
Carly Piland	1/5/2024	"yes pls"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME	4:01 PM
Lumina Buss	1/5/2024	"Old: \$3,14300 New: \$3,23700"	EW, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:02 PM
Elise Willow	1/5/2024	"I do"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:02 PM
Carly Piland	1/5/2024	"thank you!! I'm assuming this will be on the NEXT check, not the one on the 11th?"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME	4:03 PM

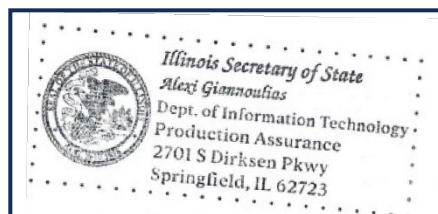
Buss stated that she is unsure why, but her colleagues seem confused about how to calculate their salary, and since she is being paid the same as an Operation Associate, she offered to share that information if they wanted to know. Buss told the OEIG that salaries are public information and can be viewed online. Buss stated that in her job she manages the pay raises and, as a result, has

access to the information. Buss explained that she handles various tasks related to pay raises, including adding the “JCL” (Job Control Language), entering the payment amounts, and obtaining approval from payroll before the program runs overnight. Buss said that since she had already run the program, it did not seem inappropriate to her to give her colleagues their new salaries.

c. The Illinois Secretary of State Stamp

Buss confirmed that she had purchased an SOS stamp to use on the envelopes instead of using the standard stickers provided by SOS. Buss stated that she had discussed the stamp with her supervisor, [SOS Employee 4], before she purchased it. She said that she was frustrated with [SOS Employee 4]’s response and that she did not believe [SOS Employee 4] submitted a request for the stamp because he mentioned that it was too expensive, which she thought was “ridiculous.” Buss added that she did not feel that [SOS Employee 4] was advising her not to purchase it.

Buss also mentioned that she had Repetitive Strain Injury in her wrist, and that she believed that SOS’s use of the stickers was a waste. Buss said she assumed that since the address was already being applied to the envelopes with the stickers, using the stamp would not be a problem. A copy of the stamp Buss ordered is shown below.



Buss said that she did not know how management discovered that she had and was using the stamp, but that she turned in the stamp, the receipt, and a sheet of the stickers to an Assistant Director of IT (name unknown). Buss stated that she obtained a copy of the state of Illinois seal from Wikipedia to use for the stamp. Buss said that that she was unaware that there was a law governing the use of the state seal, specifically 5 ILCS 460/5 (State Designations Act).

B. Thomas Lampe

Lampe stated that, per advice of his union representative, he wanted to let the OEIG know that he has [Redacted]. However, Lampe said that it would not impair his ability to answer questions. Lampe stated the following in summary but not verbatim.

Lampe has been working as an Operations Associate in the Administrative Hearing Department for nine months and had previously worked in Vehicle Services for two years.¹ Lampe stated that he processes the informal hearing files and primarily handles a significant amount of paperwork throughout the day.

a. Teams Messages

Lampe stated that both he and Willow work in the Administrative Hearings Department. Lampe stated that “socializing drains” him and he lacks the energy to socialize outside of work, so he does

¹ Thomas Lampe started working at the Illinois Secretary of State on January 3, 2022.

not socialize with work friends but does text with Willow outside of work. Lampe stated that Willow is welcoming, and since he (Lampe) tends to come off “standoffish” due to his introverted nature, Willow’s friendliness made it easier for them to become friends.

Lampe said that using Microsoft Teams in his department makes communication easier compared to just walking up to someone and talking. Lampe added that Teams is faster than sending emails.

Lampe said that supervisors often remind him and his colleagues to check their Teams messages. Lampe stated that while most management communication is conducted through email, supervisors encourage the use of Teams because Teams is a faster way to communicate than making phone calls. Lampe generally does not use Teams for personal communication but feels nervous stopping to talk to colleagues in person, so he sometimes uses Teams for personal communication. Lampe stated again that he has “[Redacted]” (he was trying to say [Redacted]) and that he prefers to not misbehave at work.

Lampe was shown Teams messages involving his correspondence with Willow. Lampe confirmed that the messages were his and that he had a vague recollection of his conversations with Willow on Teams. An example of the Teams message is shown below:

January 9, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	1/9/2024	"Like, sure maybe a bar is cool but I want to go to a club, not a bar an actual club and hang out with friends with some sh*tty music playing and people dancing and having a good time"	Thomas Lampe	9:19 AM
Thomas Lampe	1/9/2024	"i have never been to a club, there is one downtown, or at least, when i was down there, like 1 year and a half ago, i saw a line of people at a door lol."	Elise Willow	9:23 AM
Elise Willow	1/9/2024	"Yeah no I feel that. Most places I walk in I feel like I have a higher chance of getting hate crimed lmao"	Thomas Lampe	9:32 AM

Lampe said he has had other brief communications with Willow on Teams, typically involving about two to three minutes of thought in the day. Lampe said that he does not know why he chose Teams to communicate with Willow, given that they sit right next to each other. Lampe said that he prefers to communicate non-verbally.

Lampe said that he avoids using his cell phone to communicate with Willow at work because he prefers to follow the rules. Lampe said that he only checks his phone if it rings. Lampe also said that seeing others on their cell phones makes him unhappy. Lampe stated that his decision to avoid using his cell phone at work was not based on any departmental directive, but because he finds Teams easier to use for communicating because it is quicker than walking across the room or texting from his phone.

At the end of his interview, Lampe stated that he recognizes that using Teams for any personal communication was not the thing to do, and he apologized. He then repeated his apology and stated that he would never do that again, because he likes to follow the rules.

C. Skylar Collins

Collins said he has been working as an Operations Associate in the Drivers Department for just over a year.² Collins stated that for his job duties he handles numerous phone calls, and that he primarily assists the public by addressing their inquiries, reissuing driver's licenses or IDs that have not been mailed to customers, and helps Illinois residents obtain their licenses while they are out of state.

a. Teams Messages

Collins stated that he uses Teams for work to contact his supervisor, [SOS Employee 5], or another Operations Associate, for assistance with work-related questions or assistance.

Collins said that he is friends with Elise Willow and Lumina Buss, and that he has known Buss for six years and Willow for a little over a year. Collins stated that he communicates with Willow and Buss outside of work through text and social media. Collins stated that he has had personal conversations on Teams with Willow and Buss, as well as with someone who goes by the name "Serenity," although he could not recall their legal name. Collins was shown the Teams messages, and some examples of those messages are shown below:

December 29, 2023

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
Skylar Collins	12/29/2023	"I guess? xp it's so comfortable here I forgot about how shitty my old job was?"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, ME, CP	7:58 AM
[SOS Employee 1]	12/29/2023	"Mourning"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	8:02 AM
Skylar Collins	12/29/2023	"meowning!"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, ME, CP	8:03 AM

January 9, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
Skylar Collins	1/9/2024	"I really don't want to drag her but dang she is not catching on at all"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, ME, CP	3:20 PM
Lumina Buss	1/9/2024	"We don't need more dead weight."	EW, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:33 PM

² Skylar Collins started working at the Illinois Secretary of State on June 16, 2023.

Skyler Collins	1/9/2024	"oof yeah but she speaks Chinese so she could help somewhere"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, ME, CP	3:36 PM
Lumina Buss	1/9/2024	"Not if she doesn't understand the rest of us and our processes."	EW, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:37 PM

Collins stated that the Teams group was established for the [Redacted] community, but he was unsure who create it. Collins said that he believed Buss added him to the group. Collins explained that he uses Teams for personal communication instead of text because he sees it as "the digital version of the water cooler in the office, where it is always available, and everyone is constantly on it." Collins stated that he is familiar with the SOS cell phone policy.

Collins confirmed that he and Willow lived together and are friends, which made them feel comfortable communicating freely on Teams. Collins said that the group does not currently use Teams for communication and that the last time he used Teams for personal matters was three days before the interview, on August 05, 2024. Collins stated that communication "just went quiet" on August 05, 2024, and when asked, stated that it stopped when he received the OEIG's interview notice. Collins later acknowledged that he might have sent a "Good morning" message once between August 05, 2024, and August 08, 2024.

D. Carly Piland

Piland is an Operations Assistant with the Administrative Hearings Department and had previously worked as an Operations Assistant in Vehicle Services. She has been with the SOS for about two years and a half.³

a. Teams Messages

Piland said that she was friends with two people in her department, Elise Willow and [SOS Employee 6], [Redacted]. Piland stated that she is part of the Microsoft Teams group in question but said that most of the other members are primarily Willow's contacts, and she does not know them very well.

Piland said that while email is an efficient way for her to communicate within the department for her job, Teams is a little faster. Piland stated that she uses Teams to discuss break coverage and to seek clarification on work tasks. Piland said that she has used Teams for personal communication with Willow, Collins, Buss, and a few others whose names she could not recall at that moment.

Piland was shown the Teams messages, and she stated that she was familiar with everyone involved in the Teams group. Some examples of those messages are shown below:

December 19, 2023

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
[SOS Employee 1]	12/19/2023	"Why is she moaning and whimpering"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	9:54 AM

³ Carly Piland started working at the Illinois Secretary of State on March 14, 2022.

Carly Piland	12/19/2023	"She hit something against her desk lol"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME	9:54 AM
Carly Piland	12/19/2023	"her foot or knee or something idk"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, ME, CP	9:55 AM

January 3, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
[SOS Employee 2]	1/3/2024	"pretty positive, because [SOS Employee 7] held the one hearing and didn't address something she should have so it's amended and the other one was able to go to an informal and get an RDP"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, ME, CP	2:39 PM
[SOS Employee 2]	1/3/2024	"it's all a JOKE"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, ME, CP	2:39 PM
Elise Willow	1/3/2024	"fckin [SOS Employee 7]"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	2:39 PM
Carly Piland	1/3/2024	"that's ridiculous that should have been the easiest denial hearing ever"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME	2:44 PM
Carly Piland	1/3/2024	".....but [SOS Employee 7]"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME	2:44 PM

January 5, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
Carly Piland	1/5/2024	"but if you're using all your time for FMLA how are you supposed to have any time off for anything other than being sick"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME	2:44 PM
[SOS Employee 2]	1/5/2024	"when i got it for my appointments i do not recall them telling me it would use my vaca but can not remember anything these days"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, ME, CP	2:44 PM

Piland said that the group chat was established by someone within the group and was created to promote friendliness with contacts in other departments. Piland also added that the chat was intended to be a "safe place" to vent about issues, although she is unsure if that was its primary purpose.

Piland stated that the "[SOS Employee 8], [SOS Employee 9], and [SOS Employee 10]" mentioned in some of the Teams chat are [SOS Employee 8], [Redacted]; [SOS Employee 9], [Redacted]; [SOS Employee 10], a contractual worker; but she was unable to recall [SOS Employee 11]'s last name. She said that all four people worked in her department at Administrative Hearings. Piland stated that [SOS Employee 10] is one of the Supervisors, [SOS Employee 8] handles permit issuance and writes letters for permits, [SOS Employee 9] is also involved with permits, and that

[SOS Employee 11] had previously worked in the department.

Piland stated that the group chose to use Teams instead of their cell phones to minimize cell phone usage during work. Piland stated that she usually avoids using her cell phone to communicate with co-workers during work hours, except for occasional Instagram and Facebook interactions with Willow and [SOS Employee 6]. Piland stated that although some conversations in the group were work-related, members also discuss personal matters. Piland stated that everyone in the Teams group is part of the [Redacted] community. Piland mentioned that, to her knowledge, the Teams group was created by an SOS employee and was not officially sanctioned by SOS or a Supervisor.

Piland said that the Teams chats eventually became overwhelming. Piland saw the merits of discussing both work and non-work-related topics, but it became apparent to her that she needed to stop. Piland stated that the Teams chats became overwhelming when the frequency of messages increased beyond her expectations. Piland said that her last message in the group was the Friday before the interview (August 2, 2024). Piland said that after Monday, August 5, 2024, she removed herself from the group and deleted it from her Teams application. Piland said she did that after she received the OEIG's interview notice, because she figured it was related.

E. Marzipan Eyrie

Marzipan Eyrie stated that she has been an Operations Associate at the Illinois Secretary of State (SOS) since October 2023, and began working at the SOS in July 2022 in other positions. Eyrie described her job duties as performing audits and coding vehicle titles. Eyrie said that she also rotates job duties with her colleagues and frequently handles outgoing mail. Eyrie said that she loves her job but has submitted her two-week notice to start her own art business, and that her last day is August 16, 2024.

a. Teams Messages

Eyrie said that she does not use Microsoft Teams for work and had uninstalled it from her computer since February 2024. Eyrie also said that an SOS newsletter⁴ had issued a statement advising SOS employees not to use Teams for personal conversations. Eyrie admitted to using Teams for personal conversations before she uninstalled it in February 2024, and mentioned that she had heard from Willow, Buss, and Collins that misuse of Teams was the reason she was called in for an interview with OEIG.

Eyrie said that the Teams group was created for the [Redacted] community to vent about life and the job, manage job related stress, and discuss things that were causing them stress. Eyrie also said that the group was created as a source of support, since some members had supervisors who were not well-versed in policies. Eyrie said that they used the group to help each other navigate and understand these issues.

⁴ On February 29, 2024, [SOS Employee 12], [Redacted], emailed the February 2024 ILSOS Monthly Newsletter, which included an "Ethics Tip: Please Don't Misuse State Resources" section that read, "As employees of the Illinois Secretary of State, we have access to sensitive information and significant technological resources. Unfortunately, we've seen more reports of the misuse of ILSOS technology like accessing Microsoft Teams for personal use and using ILSOS databases to obtain confidential information. Such conduct violates ILSOS Policies and could lead to discipline. For example, Article 4 of the ILSOS Code of Ethical Conduct states all ILSOS "employees ... shall ... treat government property with due care, utilizing state resources in the public interest and only for officially approved work activities..." Also see SOS Policy 7.2 concerning "Use of State-Owned Computer Equipment." If you have questions regarding these policies, contact [Redacted] [SOS Employee 12]: [\[redacted\]@ilsos.gov](mailto:[redacted]@ilsos.gov)."

Eyrie said she did not know if the [Redacted] support group on Teams was officially sanctioned by the SOS. Eyrie said, "I don't think I would be here if they had." Eyrie said that she used Teams during the workday and reserved her cell phone for communication after hours.

Eyrie was shown the Teams messages and she said she recognized the messages and everyone mentioned in them, although they were from "a while ago." Examples of some of the Teams messages are shown below:

January 3, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Marzipan Eyrie	1/3/2024	"this persons name is [Individual 3]"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, CP	4:04 PM
Elise Willow	1/3/2024	"I sure hope their last name is "Mockingbird"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:05 PM
Marzipan Eyrie	1/3/2024	"SAME BRAINCELL"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, CP	4:08 PM

January 5, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
Marzipan Eyrie	1/5/2024	"i wonder if my boss was wrong? she was very clear about it using vacay"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, CP	2:45 PM
[SOS Employee 1]	1/5/2024	"Yeah they don't care. This is America"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	2:45 PM
Marzipan Eyrie	1/5/2024	"im glad yall also think that sucks. validating"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, CP	2:45 PM

January 9, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
Marzipan Eyrie	1/9/2024	"[SOS Employee 13] made it so we cant do Time Theft and wants us all to line up to write on the paper at exactly 430"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, CP	4:24 PM
Elise Willow	1/9/2024	"Woof"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:24 PM
[SOS Employee 1]	1/9/2024	"WTF"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:24 PM
[SOS Employee 1]	1/9/2024	"That's annoying"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:24 PM
[SOS Employee 1]	1/9/2024	"It's so weird how there's so many different ways to keep time between departments"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:24 PM

Eyrie said that the members in the Teams group frequently joked about things they wished they could do but would not actually do. Eyrie then added that she was not in the same room to verify whether they acted on these jokes. Eyrie said that she was going through a difficult period around mid-2023, so she does not clearly remember things.

Eyrie was shown a message sent on January 5, 2024, shown below, and asked to what it referred:

January 5, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Marzipan Eyrie	1/5/2024	"time to move everything on his desk slightly"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, CP, [SOS Employee 2]	4:01 PM
[SOS Employee 2]	1/5/2024	"just a quarter inch to the left"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:01 PM

Eyrie said that her comments were “meant as a joke and were like sarcasm.” Eyrie stated that she did not know who she was referring to, but said that at the time she said it in a joking manner like, “Oh, it’s time to mess with their desk then? I don’t know.” Eyrie said she believed her colleagues were complaining about someone being sensitive about their workspace, which she thought was reasonable because it was their workspace.

F. Serenity Hubal

Hubal said that they have worked as an Information Systems Specialist for three years and started their career at SOS as an Information Systems Technician six years ago.⁵ Hubal said that in their role as an Information Systems Specialist their responsibilities involve resolving assigned issues and often “floundering” between various tasks.

a. Teams Messages

Hubal stated that Microsoft Teams is essential for their job and that the entire user support team utilizes it. Hubal said that their department primarily uses Teams for communication, especially when they or others are working from home. Hubal said that Teams helps keep the department updated on office activities, such as outages, and they also use it between IT departments for “escalation” issues.

Hubal stated that they had “interspersed” personal conversations with their friends on Teams but they “do not strictly” use it for personal chat. Hubal said that a group of their friends and associates sends Teams messages to individuals via group chats, but it is not an official Teams “channel” within the application.

Hubal was shown the Teams messages, and they stated that they were familiar with everyone in the group chat on Teams. Examples of some of the messages are shown below:

⁵ Serenity Hubal started working at the Illinois Secretary of State on December 3, 2018.

January 5, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	1/5/2024	"wtf is he even talking about?"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:20 PM
Carly Piland	1/5/2024	"what even got taken?????"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME	3:22 PM
Marzipan Eyrie	1/5/2024	"WHY DOES HE ONLY COMMUNICATE LIKE A GRANDPA LEARNING FACEBOOK"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, CP	3:22 PM
Elise Willow	1/5/2024	"I took the gray cart because there wasnt another one at the time to move files and them [SOS Employee 1] borrowed it from me"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:25 PM
Serenity Hubal	1/5/2024	"WHat an absolute Child"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SC, ME, CP	3:27 PM
[SOS Employee 1]	1/5/2024	"I have NEVER moved anything of his. Never touched it. And I do NOT appreciate being accused. Especially in such an unprofessional way."	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:29 PM
Lumina Buss	1/5/2024	"Whoever keeps moving the carts into areas where people walk make me so angry."	EW, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:32 PM
Elise Willow	1/5/2024	"The thing that gets me is that I AM THE ONE WHO "took" something from his area. and it wasnt his. it was the damn cart while he was on lunch"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:33 PM
Serenity Hubal	1/5/2024	"I dont understand people who feel they have ownership over state owned property. Like they get defensive over there computers as if they were their home computers."	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SC, ME, CP	3:33 PM
Elise Willow	1/5/2024	"No one touched shit on his desk"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:33 PM
Marzipan Eyrie	1/5/2024	"time to move everything on his desk slightly"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, CP, [SOS Employee 2]	4:01 PM
[SOS Employee 2]	1/5/2024	"just a quarter inch to the left"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, ME, CP	4:01 PM

Hubal said they did not know or recall the identity of the employee referenced in the Teams messages shown above.

January 9, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
[SOS Employee 2]	1/9/2024	"[SOS Employee 10] just said she took 51 calls and the queue just kept going up"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, ME, CP	1:52 PM
Elise Willow	1/9/2024	"yeah phone queue is up to 43"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	1:52 PM
Serenity Hubal	1/9/2024	"Supports been at about 20 all day"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SC, ME, CP	2:02 PM

Hubal said that they did not know [SOS Employee 8], [SOS Employee 9], [SOS Employee 11], and [SOS Employee 10] (referenced above) who were mentioned in some of the Teams messages.

Hubal said that the Teams group chat was already in existence before they joined and said that they began participating in the chat shortly after meeting Buss. Hubal also said that the group is intended for the [Redacted] community, and that it was a support group for the [Redacted] community. Hubal stated that they would also use the group chat to provide the group with updates during outages to reduce the need for the group to have to call the help desk and wait thirty minutes for information. Hubal said that the group avoided using cell phones for communication due to SOS's cell phone policy.

Hubal was also shown Teams messages of a seemingly more personal nature between him and Willow, examples of which are shown below:

December 27, 2023

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	12/27/2023	"I cant want to pet you and give you all the smooches"	Serenity Hubal	8:24 AM

January 4, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"So you want to go on a date with me?"	Serenity Hubal	8:12 AM
Serenity Hubal	1/4/2024	"Yes I do hun (:"	Elise Willow	8:12 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"I would love to"	Serenity Hubal	8:12 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"We shall have to plan something then"	Serenity Hubal	8:13 AM
Serenity Hubal	1/4/2024	"I was going to surprise ask you but I wasn't sure what kind of things you liked to do out and about"	Elise Willow	8:13 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"Youre so adorable and SUCH a good girl"	Serenity Hubal	8:13 AM

January 9, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
Elise Willow	1/9/2024	"Puppy!!!"	Serenity Hubal	8:16 AM
Serenity Hubal	1/9/2024	"Bird!!!"	Elise Willow	8:20 AM
Serenity Hubal	1/9/2024	"Awwwo"	Elise Willow	8:20 AM
Elise Willow	1/9/2024	"Caaaww!!!"	Serenity Hubal	8:20 AM

After reading the messages, Hubal said that they and Willow are simply friends and that they did not date and were never romantically involved. Hubal also said that they had talked about going out for on a date but never actually did.

Hubal stated to the OEIG that their behavior “clashes” with their usual professional conduct and they apologized for their actions as shown to them in the Teams messages. Hubal said that they had only used the Teams group chat sporadically and that their usage had significantly decreased. Hubal said that for about two or three months, they had only used the Teams group chat to send “Good mornings,” “Goodbyes,” and “Hello.”

Hubal stated that as they reflected on the messages from the Teams group chat, they felt it was a “lapse of judgment” on their part and acknowledged that it was not appropriate for work. Hubal said that they believed the messages would remain private as they did not think anyone would have a reason to review them.

E. Elise Willow

Willow has worked in Administrative Hearings as an Office Operations Supervisor since July 16, 2024, where she was previously an Administrative Clerk. She has worked in other positions since she started at SOS in November 2019. Willow said that she oversees the phone bank, addresses issues sent via email with her team, processes out-of-state applications, learns the details of the out-of-state process, and assists with implementing credit payments for the Restricted Driving Permit (RDP) fee payments that SOS is working on. Willow said that she supervises seven employees.

Willow said that she has formed friendships at work with Lumina Buss; Serenity “Serenity” Hubal; Carly Piland; [SOS Employee 6]; and Thomas⁶ (last name unknown). Willow said that she does not socialize with her work friends outside of work, but she does live with Buss and Buss’s ex-partner, Skyler (last name unknown)⁷.

a. Teams Messages

Willow said that Microsoft Teams is frequently used in her job for managers to keep track of each

⁶ Willow is referring Thomas Lampe, Operations Associate.

⁷ Willow is referring to Skyler Collins, Operations Associate.

other and to contact other departments. Willow said that she uses Teams for personal matters but does not always discuss personal topics with the group she chats with.

Willow said that the Teams chat group she participated in was for the [Redacted] community. Willow said that she believes it was originally started by [SOS Employee 14]⁸, [Redacted], but he has since left the group. Willow said that she cannot recall who added her initially, but she took over managing the group after the original members left.

Willow was shown Teams messages, and she said that she recognized both the messages and all the members in the Teams group chat. Examples of some of the Teams messages are shown below:

December 19, 2023

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
Carly Piland	12/19/2023	"this guy's middle name is [Individual 4]"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME	8:11 AM
[SOS Employee 1]	12/19/2023	"Drag king name"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	8:11 AM
Elise Willow	12/19/2023	"I want them to work as a hearing officer lmao"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	8:12 AM
[SOS Employee 1]	12/19/2023	"[Individual 4] your license-us"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	8:12 AM
Elise Willow	12/19/2023	"This is officer [Individual 4]" "Fuck"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	8:12 AM

January 2, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	1/2/2024	"OK but why did they mark a toner box as an Imaging Unit???"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	11:45 AM
Elise Willow	1/2/2024	"I swear I am going to get a list compiled for that shit"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	11:45 AM
[SOS Employee 1]	1/2/2024	"wtf"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	12:01 PM

Willow acknowledged that between December 18, 2024, and January 9, 2024, the only Teams group chat she did not actively participate in was on December 29, 2024, because she was off work that day.

Willow said the group opted to use Teams instead of cell phones because they are not permitted to use their cell phones at work. Willow said that multiple emails had been sent to Administrative Hearings regarding cell phone usage.

Willow was shown Teams messages of a seemingly more personal nature solely between herself and Buss, examples of which are shown below:

⁸ According to Personnel records, [SOS Employee 14] is an [Redacted] with Vehicle Services-Expedited Titles.

December 28, 2023

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	12/28/2023	"and also mentioned that there is a difference between wanting to be spanked as a punishment and just desiring to take pain as a way to be like "Look im so good, I can take so much for you" and I think im in the latter section"	Lumina Buss	3:33 PM
Lumina Buss	12/28/2023	"Interesting, I dunno why I expected more of an overlap. Awe~you really do just want to be my good girl."	Elise Willow	3:36 PM
Elise Willow	12/28/2023	"that right there"	Lumina Buss	3:56 PM

January 4, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"Gods, I was thinking about us holding each other yesterday and it made me shiver with delight"	Lumina Buss	10:41 AM
Lumina Buss	1/4/2024	" ^ _ ^ the most sapphic"	Elise Willow	10:42 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"It was just so lovely and wonderful and I want it right now"	Lumina Buss	10:43 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"This second"	Lumina Buss	10:43 AM
Lumina Buss	1/4/2024	"Mmm me too. Doing WFH is actually a a bit stressful."	Elise Willow	10:45 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"I wish I were there to make it less stressful"	Lumina Buss	10:51 AM
Lumina Buss	1/4/2024	"I would be interesting if it's possible to WFH while cuddling"	Elise Willow	11:11 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"I would love to cuddle you from your desk"	Lumina Buss	11:38 AM
Lumina Buss	1/4/2024	"hehe have us both wfh but im on your lap hehe"	Elise Willow	11:40 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"getting eepy"	Lumina Buss	11:41 AM
Lumina Buss	1/4/2024	"I'd love to see if we could make that work. I was more imagining us in bed and we get another laptop tray."	Elise Willow	11:45 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"Hehehehe that would be cute"	Lumina Buss	11:45 AM
Lumina Buss	1/4/2024	"So now you have 4 gold fish coupons?"	Elise Willow	1:44 PM
Lumina Buss	1/4/2024	"Continuing to be my good girl (:"	Elise Willow	1:44 PM

Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"I like being your good girl"	Lumina Buss	1:45 PM
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Willow said that Buss was her girlfriend, but they are no longer dating. Willow said that they stopped dating in July 2024, about a month before this interview.

Willow was shown Teams messages from January 5, 2024, where Buss provided her with her new salary information, as shown below:

January 5, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Lumina Buss	1/5/2024	"WILLOW ELISE D [REDACTED] K0300 \$3,770.00 03/00 3.00 PERCENT NEGOTIATED IN"	Elise Willow	3:58 PM
Elise Willow	1/5/2024	"oooooh"	Lumina Buss	4:02 PM

Willow stated that she was calculating her new salary with a 3% increase and that Buss either confirmed or provided the answer, but she did not recall which it was.

Willow was also shown Teams messages between herself and Hubal, and she remarked, "Oh, that's Serenity." An example from the Teams message between them is shown below:

January 4, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipient	Time
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"So you want to go on a date with me?"	Serenity Hubal	8:12 AM
Serenity Hubal	1/4/2024	"Yes I do hun (:"	Elise Willow	8:12 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"I would love to"	Serenity Hubal	8:12 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"We shall have to plan something then"	Serenity Hubal	8:13 AM
Serenity Hubal	1/4/2024	"I was going to surprise ask you but I wasn't sure what kind of things you liked to do out and about"	Elise Willow	8:13 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"Youre so adorable and SUCH a good girl"	Serenity Hubal	8:13 AM
Elise Willow	1/4/2024	"coffee date with you sounds good tbh. Grab some coffee and chat"	Serenity Hubal	8:14 AM

Willow said that she and Hubal are good friends who hang out and play card games together, but they have never dated. Willow said that regarding going out for coffee, they have not yet done so.

Willow said that she is now in a separate Teams group chat with Piland and [SOS Employee 6] where they discuss lunch, but she no longer participates in personal conversations from the Teams group chat as she did before.

Regarding the individuals named “[SOS Employee 8], [SOS Employee 9], [SOS Employee 11], and [SOS Employee 10]”⁹ mentioned in the Teams messages, Willow said that all four employees worked in Administrative Hearings. An example of a Teams message is shown below:

January 5, 2024

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
[SOS Employee 1]	1/5/2024	"I talked to [SOS Employee 10] in her office and then went on a walk to cool down"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:28 PM
[SOS Employee 1]	1/5/2024	"I have NEVER moved anything of his. Never touched it. And I do NOT appreciate being accused. Especially in such an unprofessional way."	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:29 PM
Elise Willow	1/5/2024	"I took the cart back to him and put his shit on it, he thanked me and I told him that I took it to use it and that the other cart was not there"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:29 PM
[SOS Employee 1]	1/5/2024	"He doesn't own the cart. It's communal."	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	3:29 PM

Willow explained that in the message above, [SOS Employee 9] was upset because someone had taken the “office cart,” which is meant for everyone in the department to use for carrying items like files, but [SOS Employee 9] believed it was only for his use.

The Teams messages related to a discussion about [SOS Employee 8] is shown below:

December 19, 2023

Name	Date	Teams Messages	Message Recipients	Time
[SOS Employee 1]	12/19/2023	"Why is she moaning and whimpering"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	9:54 AM
Carly Piland	12/19/2023	"She hit something against her desk lol"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME	9:54 AM
Elise Willow	12/19/2023	"[SOS Employee 8], as per usual"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	9:54 AM
Carly Piland	12/19/2023	"her foot or knee or something idk"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	9:55 AM
[SOS Employee 2]	12/19/2023	"she bumped her knee and was overly dramatic attention seeking about it"	EW, LB, [SOS Employee 1], SH, SC, ME, CP	9:55 AM
Elise Willow	12/19/2023	"good"	LB, [SOS Employee 1], [SOS Employee 2], SH, SC, ME, CP	9:55 AM

⁹ Elise Willow said that [SOS Employee 11]’s last name started with a “[Redacted]” but did not recall his last name (likely [SOS Employee 11], [Redacted]); that [SOS Employee 8] was [SOS Employee 8], [Redacted]; [SOS Employee 9]’s last name started with a “[Redacted]” (likely [SOS Employee 9], [Redacted]); and [SOS Employee 10] was [SOS Employee 10], a contractual worker. Willow said that [SOS Employee 8] handles some type of coding in the Administrative Hearings department, and that [SOS Employee 10] was Willow’s supervisor at the time the messages were sent.

Willow could not recall precisely what she meant by the “[SOS Employee 8] per usual comment” from the message shown above. Willow said that [SOS Employee 8] was “just a loud person” and stated that she has no conflicts with her. Willow said that they had a period of back-and-forth discussion while trying to figure out a schedule together, but they were not angry with each other.

Willow said she is no longer active in the [Redacted] Teams group chat, because she removed herself from the group before July 16, 2024, after learning she would be getting the Office Operations Supervisor position. Willow said that she does not know if the group is still active. Willow said that the [Redacted] group was initially created for members to vent and alleviate work-related tension and to stay in touch with coworkers from other departments across the state.

IV. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

A. Use of Illinois Secretary of State Resources

State employees are prohibited from using State resources for nonwork-related reasons. The Illinois Secretary of State’s (SOS) User Acceptable Use policy 7.8.1 states more specifically that SOS computers and user accounts are to be used only for SOS business and not for personal activities. Under the SOS Code of Conduct policy 1.1.4(d), SOS employees are to use government property for officially approved work activities. The SOS further includes as one of the prohibited uses, under policy 7.8.3, using agency-owned IT resource for activities that are inappropriate or offensive to fellow employees.

Teams was used here by the previously identified SOS employees to create a “support” group for the [Redacted] community to “to vent about life and the job, manage job related stress, and discuss things that were causing them stress,” as Marzipan Eyrie explained. The Teams chat group then became “the digital version of the water cooler in the office, where it is always available, and everyone is constantly on it,” as Skylar Collins described it. According to additional statements during the interviews, the group used Teams to avoid using cell phones to communicate with one another because of the SOS cell phone policy, Use of State Phones/Devices and Personal Phones policy 6.10.2. The SOS cell phone policy allows reasonable but limited personal use during working hours.

Elise Willow was the only one in the group that knew who started the group, and said she took over managing it. Willow said the group opted to use Teams instead of cell phones because they are not permitted to use their cell phones at work. Although Willow left the [Redacted] group when she was promoted, she said she started a separate group where they discuss lunch plans but that she no longer participates in personal conversations.

- All of the Teams group members that were interviewed by the OEIG, admitted to using the Teams chat feature to engage in personal conversations.
 - For the time period reviewed, Thomas Lampe engaged in only one personal conversation with Elise Willow but did not participate in the group discussions reviewed, although he acknowledged that he was an active participant in the subsequent groups Teams chats until August 2024.
 - Marzipan Eyrie had stopped using the Teams chat in February 2024.

- Thomas Lampe and Serenity Hubal were contrite, and both acknowledged that using Teams for any personal communication was inappropriate, a “lapse of judgment,” and apologized.

B. Confidential Information

By the nature of their position or job, an SOS employee may have access to information that is personal, confidential, sensitive and non-public, which may include, but not be limited to, documents, files, personnel or internal department records. Under the SOS’s Confidential Information policy 1.7.1., SOS information may only be accessed, used, removed or disclosed by an employee for official State business, and an employee that uses, removes or discloses confidential and/or sensitive information for nonofficial state business, shall be disciplined, up to and including discharge.

The SOS, through its User Responsibilities policy 7.8.1, restricts an employee’s access to SOS systems and data based on that employee’s job requirements limiting them to only the minimum amount of access required to perform their assigned duties, and under the Acceptable Use policy 7.8.2, users shall only access sensitive information necessary to perform their job functions.

Under the Use of State-Owned Computer Equipment policy 7.2.1, the SOS also prohibits the use state owned computer equipment, which is not in accordance with the employee’s job, for unauthorized purposes that includes uses not in accordance with the employee’s job, and unauthorized access to confidential data.

As a Computer Production Specialist I, Lumina Buss had access to the database that provides employee salary information because, as she said, she handles various tasks related to pay raises. Buss said that salaries are public information and can be viewed online. She said that since she had already run the program and is being paid the same as an Operation Associate, she offered to share the new salary information to the Teams group members.

Lumina Buss admitted that because she had already accessed the information as part of her job, that she then provided the information to her Teams group members because it is public information. The salaries of Illinois state public employees are available online for public viewing on the Illinois Comptroller’s salary database website. However, salary information contained in the SOS database is non-public information and subject to the restrictions discussed above.

- By using her SOS computer and access to the SOS systems and data, Lumina Buss exceeded the scope of her job responsibilities as a Computer Production Specialist I in violation of SOS policies and breached the confidentiality of personnel or internal department records to disclose nonpublic salary information to the Teams Group.

C. The Illinois Secretary of State Stamp

The reproduction of the Great Seal of the State of Illinois (State Seal) is generally permitted if it meets the specifications under the State Designations Act, 5 ILCS 460/1, *et seq.* But that is inapposite here. One of the Standards in the SOS Code of Conduct policy 1.1.5 states that it is insubordination to disobey any order or directive.

In this case, Lumina Buss asked her supervisor, [SOS Employee 4], to get her a stamp to use in lieu of using return label peel off stickers because she said she had repetitive strain injury. [SOS

Employee 4] stated that after considering Buss's request, he told her he was not going to request a stamp and using the stickers was fine.

Buss's stated reasons for ordering the stamp despite [SOS Employee 4]'s response were that she was frustrated with his response, did not believe he submitted a request for the stamp, and did not feel that [SOS Employee 4] was advising her not to purchase it. Buss obtained a copy of the State Seal from Wikipedia, designed the stamp with the State Seal and to the right of the seal in varying fonts wrote, "Illinois Secretary of State, Alexi Giannoulas, Department of Information Technology, Production Assurance, 2701 S. Dirksen Pkwy, Springfield, IL 62723," and ordered 2 stamps from Amazon herself.

- Buss used the stamp on correspondence sent from her department for approximately one month before it was discovered and she was told to turn it in, which she did. [SOS Employee 4] stated that Buss did not mention her carpal tunnel (repetitive hand strain injuries) again and that she has never filed a reasonable accommodation request. By failing to heed [SOS Employee 4]'s directive to use the stickers, Buss ignored his determination and proceeded on her own to affix an unauthorized stamp on official correspondence.

V. SOS POLICY VIOLATIONS

The OEIG has the authority to interpret and administer the policies of the Illinois Secretary of State. Following its investigation, the OEIG concludes that reasonable cause exists to believe that the actions by **Lumina S. Buss, Skyler E. Collins, Serenity J. Hubal, Carly D. Piland, Elise D. Willow, Marzipan Eyrie (resigned) (collectively, the group)**, constitute violations of the following provisions in the Illinois Secretary of State's Policy Manual, specified below. Former SOS employees [SOS Employee 1] and [SOS Employee 2] also appeared as regular participants in the Teams group chats, however, the OEIG was unable to interview them.

The OEIG notes that **Thomas M. Lampe** engaged in a private conversation with Elise Willow but did not participate in the group discussions reviewed, although he did acknowledge that he was an active participant in the subsequent groups Teams chats until August 2024.

SOS Code of Ethical Conduct

A. The Group Violations

- Article 2: Efficiency
 - 1..1.1: By engaging in conversations about other SOS employees in a disparaging manner, the group, except Thomas M. Lampe, failed to treat other employees ... fairly, impartially, and with equal dignity.
- 1.1.2(b): Employees of the Illinois Secretary of State are to "perform their duties during scheduled working hours, providing the Office with a full day of work," which the group failed to do by sending personal messages on Teams chat, throughout the seven dates reviewed.
- Article 3: Professionalism
 - 1.1.3(e): By discussing matters of a personal nature and or other SOS employees, the group failed to conduct "themselves in a professional manner with other employees."

- Article 4: Lawfulness
 - 1.1.4(a): In using the SOS's Teams platform and their SOS computers, the group failed to "obey all laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations" prohibiting the personal use of state resources, in violation of the SOS Lawfulness policy.
 - 1.1.4(d): In using the SOS's Teams platform and their SOS computers, the group failed to "treat government property with due care, utilizing state resources in the public interest and only for officially approved work activities, in violation of the SOS Lawfulness policy.
- Article 5: Standards
 - 1.1.5(p): The group misused or used state property, specifically their computers and the Teams platform, for a reason other than official state duties, by engaging in personal conversations, in violation of the SOS Standards policy.

B. Elise Willow and Lumina Buss Additional Violation

Article 5: Standards

1.1.5(aa): By sending each other Teams messages with sexual innuendoes and suggestive comments, Willow and Buss engaged in "Inappropriate conduct ... through verbal ... actions, no matter of the extent or frequency," in violation of the SOS Standards policy.

C. Elise Willow and Serenity Hubal Additional Violation

Article 5: Standards

1.1.5(aa): By sending each other Teams messages with sexual innuendo, Willow and Hubal engaged in "Inappropriate conduct ... through verbal ... actions, no matter of the extent or frequency," in violation of the SOS Standards policy.

D. Lumina Buss Additional Violations

- Article 3: Professionalism
 - 1.1.3(a): When Buss provided group members their salary information from the SOS payroll information she accessed the in the course of her job function, she failed to "preserve confidentiality in the performance of her duties" in violation of the SOS Professionalism policy.
- Article 5: Standards
 - 1.1.5(c): By copying the State seal, designing an SOS stamp, purchasing and using the stamp, despite her supervisor telling her to use the peel stickers, Buss was insubordinate when she disobeyed a directive and showed disrespect to her supervisor in violation of the SOS Standards policy.
- Article 5: Standards
 - 1.1.5(p): Buss's acts of providing group members their salary information from the SOS database, and designing an SOS stamp, constitute her "misusing, abusing, ... unauthorized access to, or use of state property for any reason other than official state duties including but not limited to office supplies, documents, equipment, ...," in violation of the SOS Standards policy.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of its investigation, the OEIG determined that reasonable cause exists to believe that Lumina S. Buss, Skyler E. Collins, Serenity J. Hubal, Thomas M. Lampe, Carly D. Piland, Elise D. Willow, Marzipan Eyrie (resigned) have violated the Secretary of State's Personnel provisions found in the Policy Manual, as detailed above.

The OEIG recommends that the Secretary of State take appropriate progressive disciplinary action, with respect to **Lumina S. Buss, Skyler E. Collins, Serenity J. Hubal, Thomas M. Lampe, Carly D. Piland, and Elise D. Willow**, and a copy of the Summary Report be placed in their respective personnel files.

As to **Marzipan Eyrie**, the OEIG recommends that a copy of the Summary Report be placed in her personnel file.

The OEIG did not issue any findings on former SOS employees **[SOS Employee 1]** and **[SOS Employee 2]**, because the OEIG was unable to interview them as they had resigned on [Redacted], and [Redacted], respectively. However, the OEIG recommends that a copy of the Summary Report be placed in their personnel files with notice to the OEIG should they return to SOS employment.

No further investigative action is warranted, and this case is now closed.

Date: October 8, 2024

Office of the Executive Inspector for the
Illinois Secretary of State
69 West Washington Street, Suite 1220
Chicago, IL 60602

Ana Collazo
Executive Inspector General

Joy Willis
Executive Investigator II

Attachments

**OEIG CASE NO.: 24-0001
TIME ANALYSIS SUMMARY**

DATE	CHAT PARTICIPANTS	CHAT PARTICIPANTS	CHAT PARTICIPANTS	CHAT PARTICIPANTS	Cumulative Total (h:mm)
Monday, December 18, 2023	Elise Willow & Serenity Hubal	Elise Willow, Lumina Buss, Emily Rhodes			
Total	0:09	0:10			0:19
Tuesday, December 19, 2023	Lumina Buss; Skyler Collins; Marzipan Eyrie; Serenity Hubal; Carly Piland; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]				
Total	0:14				0:14
Wednesday, December 27, 2023	Elise Willow & Serenity Hubal				
Total	0:01				0:01
Thursday, December 28, 2023	Elise Willow & Lumina Buss				
Total	0:03				0:03
Friday, December 29, 2023	Lumina Buss; Skyler Collins; Marzipan Eyrie; Serenity Hubal; Carly Piland; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]				
Total	1:20				1:20
Saturday December 30, 2023	Lumina Buss; Serenity Hubal; Carly Piland; [REDACTED]				
Total	0:04				0:04
Tuesday, January 2, 2024	Elise Willow & Skylar Collins	Elise Willow & [REDACTED]	Skyler Collins; Marzipan Eyrie; Serenity Hubal; Carly Piland; [REDACTED] Elise Willow; [REDACTED]	Elise Willow & [REDACTED]	
Total	0:04	0:02	0:29	0:02	0:37
Wednesday, January 3, 2024	Lumina Buss; Skyler Collins; Marzipan Eyrie; Serenity Hubal; Carly Piland; Elise Willow; [REDACTED]	Elise Willow & [REDACTED]	Elise Willow & Lumina Buss		
Total	0:31	0:06	0:12		0:49
Thursday, January 4, 2024	Elise Willow & Serenity Hubal	Elise Willow & Lumina Buss	Lumina Buss; Skyler Collins; Marzipan Eyrie; Serenity Hubal; Carly Piland; [REDACTED]	Elise Willow & Lumina Buss	
Total	0:04	0:09	0:21	0:06	0:40
Friday, January 5, 2024	Elise Willow & Serenity Hubal	Lumina Buss; Skyler Collins; Marzipan Eyrie; Serenity Hubal; Carly Piland; [REDACTED]	Elise Willow & Lumina Buss		
Total	0:02	0:38	0:02		0:42
Tuesday, January 9, 2024	Elise Willow & Serenity Hubal	Lumina Buss; Skyler Collins; Marzipan Eyrie; Serenity Hubal; Carly Piland; [REDACTED]	Elise Willow & [REDACTED]	Elise Willow & Thomas Lampe	
Total	0:02	2:03	0:13	0:12	2:30
				Sum Total	7:19

Addendum 2

Redacted in its entirety



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

ALEXI GIANNOULIAS • Secretary of State

DISPOSITION NOTICE

DATE: October 8, 2024

TO: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General

FROM: Alexi Giannoulias, Secretary of State [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Lumina S. Buss, Id# [REDACTED] - Computer Production Specialist - Information Technology

OEIG Case Number: 24-0001

I have reviewed the Summary Report pertaining to the above-cited case and the following corrective or disciplinary action has been imposed and any pertinent documentation is attached:

- ☐ Verbal Reprimand
- ☐ Written Reprimand
- ☐ Suspension _____ Day(s)
- ☒ Termination
- ☐ Resignation
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Descriptive explanation (if necessary):

Discharged effective close of business April 22, 2025

A copy is maintained within the Department of Personnel for records for the employee.

Return to: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General - Office of the Executive Inspector General -
69 W. Washington St., Suite 1220 - Chicago, Illinois 60602 - [REDACTED]@ilsos.gov



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

ALEXI GIANNOULIAS • Secretary of State

DISPOSITION NOTICE

DATE: October 8, 2024

TO: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General

FROM: Alexi Giannoulis, Secretary of State [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Skyler E. Collins, Id# [REDACTED] Operations Associate - Driver Services

OEIG Case Number: 24-0001

I have reviewed the Summary Report pertaining to the above-cited case and the following corrective or disciplinary action has been imposed and any pertinent documentation is attached:

- ☐ Verbal Reprimand
- ☐ Written Reprimand
- ☒ Suspension 8 Day(s)
- ☐ Termination
- ☐ Resignation
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Descriptive explanation (if necessary):

8-day suspension effective March 19, 2025

A copy is maintained within the Department of Personnel for records for the employee

Return to: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General - Office of the Executive Inspector General -
69 W. Washington St., Suite 1220 - Chicago, Illinois 60602 - [REDACTED]@ilsos.gov



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

ALEXI GIANNOULIAS • Secretary of State

DISPOSITION NOTICE

DATE: October 8, 2024

TO: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General

FROM: Alexi Giannoulis, Secretary of State [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Marzipan Eyrie, Id# [REDACTED] - Operations Associate - Driver Services

OEIG Case Number: 24-0001

I have reviewed the Summary Report pertaining to the above-cited case and the following corrective or disciplinary action has been imposed and any pertinent documentation is attached:

- ☐ Verbal Reprimand
- ☐ Written Reprimand
- ☐ Suspension _____ Day(s)
- ☐ Termination
- ☒ Resignation
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Descriptive explanation (if necessary):

Employee resigned 08/16/2024

A copy is maintained within the Department of Personnel for records for the employee

Return to: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General - Office of the Executive Inspector General -
69 W. Washington St., Suite 1220 - Chicago, Illinois 60602 - [REDACTED]@ilsos.gov



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

ALEXI GIANNOULIAS • Secretary of State

DISPOSITION NOTICE

DATE: October 8, 2024

TO: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General

FROM: Alexi Giannoulis, Secretary of State [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Serenity J. Hubal, Id# [REDACTED] - Information Systems Specialist I -
Information Technology

OEIG Case Number: 24-0001

I have reviewed the Summary Report pertaining to the above-cited case and the following corrective or disciplinary action has been imposed and any pertinent documentation is attached:

- ☐ Verbal Reprimand
- ☐ Written Reprimand
- ☒ Suspension 8 Day(s)
- ☐ Termination
- ☐ Resignation
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Descriptive explanation (if necessary):

8-day suspension effective March 19, 2025

A copy is maintained within the Department of Personnel for records for the employee

Return to: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General - Office of the Executive Inspector General -
69 W. Washington St., Suite 1220 - Chicago, Illinois 60602 - [REDACTED]@ilsos.gov



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

ALEXI GIANNOULIAS • Secretary of State

DISPOSITION NOTICE

DATE: October 8, 2024

TO: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General

FROM: Alexi Giannoulias, Secretary of State [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Thomas M. Lampe, Id# [REDACTED] - Operations Associate - Administrative Hearings

OEIG Case Number: 24-0001

I have reviewed the Summary Report pertaining to the above-cited case and the following corrective or disciplinary action has been imposed and any pertinent documentation is attached:

- ☐ Verbal Reprimand
- ☐ Written Reprimand
- ☐ Suspension _____ Day(s)
- ☐ Termination
- ☒ Resignation
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Descriptive explanation (if necessary):

Employee resigned 09/25/2024

Return to: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General - Office of the Executive Inspector General -
69 W. Washington St., Suite 1220 - Chicago, Illinois 60602 - [REDACTED]@ilsos.gov



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

ALEXI GIANNOULIAS • Secretary of State

DISPOSITION NOTICE

DATE: October 8, 2024
TO: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General
FROM: Alexi Giannoulis, Secretary of State [REDACTED]
SUBJECT: Carly D. Piland, Id# [REDACTED] - Operations Associate - Administrative Hearings
OEIG Case Number: 24-0001

I have reviewed the Summary Report pertaining to the above-cited case and the following corrective or disciplinary action has been imposed and any pertinent documentation is attached:

- ☐ Verbal Reprimand
- ☐ Written Reprimand
- ☒ Suspension 8 Day(s)
- ☐ Termination
- ☐ Resignation
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Descriptive explanation (if necessary):

8-day suspension effective 03/19/2025

A copy is maintained within the Department of Personnel for records for the employee

Return to: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General - Office of the Executive Inspector General -
69 W. Washington St., Suite 1220 - Chicago, Illinois 60602 - [REDACTED]@ilsos.gov



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

ALEXI GIANNOULIAS • Secretary of State

DISPOSITION NOTICE

DATE: October 8, 2024

TO: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General

FROM: Alexi Giannoulias, Secretary of State [REDACTED]

SUBJECT(S): Elise D. Willow, Id# [REDACTED] - Office Operations Supervisor - Administrative Hearings

OEIG Case Number: 24-0001

I have reviewed the Summary Report pertaining to the above-cited case and the following corrective or disciplinary action has been imposed and any pertinent documentation is attached:

- ☐ Verbal Reprimand
- ☐ Written Reprimand
- ☒ Suspension 18 Day(s)
- ☐ Termination
- ☐ Resignation
- ☐ Other (Specify)

Descriptive explanation (if necessary):

18-day suspension effective 04/02/2025

A copy is maintained within the Department of Personnel for records for the employee

Return to: Ana Collazo, Executive Inspector General - Office of the Executive Inspector General -
69 W. Washington St., Suite 1220 - Chicago, Illinois 60602 - [REDACTED]@ilsos.gov