

# REPORT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE CONCERNING ITS INVESTIGATION INTO THE APRIL 11, 2024, SHIPMENT OF TASER 10 CONDUCTED ENERGY WEAPON SYSTEMS TO THE NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

April 24, 2026

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## I. INTRODUCTION

On May 19, 2025, the Public Integrity Unit (“PIU”) within the Attorney General’s Office (“AGO”) was assigned to investigate a matter that originated from an inquiry from Executive Councilor John Stephen. This inquiry, presented in a letter dated May 14, 2025, and addressed to then-New Hampshire Department of Corrections (“NHDOC”) Commissioner Helen Hanks,<sup>1</sup> regarded, in part, NHDOC’s proposal to the Governor and Council (“G&C”) for the procurement of new Axon Taser 10 systems.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, Councilor Stephen had learned that NHDOC had accepted delivery of 192 Taser 10 systems from Axon, despite the G&C not yet approving NHDOC’s pending proposal, and noted that “[t]hese issues reflect significant lapses in oversight and accountability that undermine public trust in [NHDOC’s] operations.”

Investigators and attorneys assigned to the PIU conducted a thorough formal criminal investigation into this matter. While the investigative team identified a number of deficiencies and shortcomings in NHDOC’s acquisition processes as they pertained to the Taser 10 systems, the AGO has determined that there is not sufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that a crime was committed in connection with this matter.

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<sup>1</sup> Commissioner Hanks resigned from her position, effective May 19, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> Broadly speaking, these devices are referred to as “conducted energy weapons” or “conducted energy devices.” Although often colloquially referred to as “tasers,” “Taser” is actually a trademarked brand name belonging to Axon products.

## **II. SUMMARY OF FACTS**

As noted above, this matter came to this Office after Executive Councilor Stephen expressed concerns when he learned that NHDOC had accepted shipment of 192 Taser 10 systems without first receiving requisite funding approval from the G&C. The following is a brief summary of the most essential facts learned during PIU's investigation.

### **A. Background on Assistant Commissioner Paul Raymond**

Prior to working at NHDOC, Mr. Raymond served at the New Hampshire Department of Safety for almost a decade. He first served as a curriculum program coordinator in the Division of Fire Standards and Training and Emergency Medical Services from 2011 through 2014. From 2015 through 2021, Mr. Raymond worked in various roles within the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, as well as in the Office of the Commissioner of Safety. Most of these positions appear to have involved either emergency management or public information type responsibilities. While Mr. Raymond was at one point a certified EMT prior to entering State service, he appears to have never been certified as a police officer or corrections officer.

In October of 2021, Mr. Raymond was appointed as the Director of Security and Training at NHDOC. In 2022, Mr. Raymond's position was renamed through legislation, becoming the Director of Personnel and Information. In September of 2022—less than a year after joining NHDOC—Mr. Raymond was confirmed as the Assistant Commissioner of NHDOC.

During the investigation, there was some ambiguity over what precise role or roles Mr. Raymond exercised as assistant commissioner within the NHDOC organization. Statutorily, no position is assigned to report to the assistant commissioner; instead, the commissioner is required to delegate authority and duties in writing to the assistant commissioner. See RSA 21-H:8, II(d).

However, a number of conflicting organizational charts exist that appear to provide for different roles and span of authority for the assistant commissioner. For example, according to one organizational chart on NHDOC's website, all division directors as well as the facility wardens report to the assistant commissioner.<sup>3</sup> In another organizational chart also found on the NHDOC website, however, only the Divisions of Administration, Personnel and Information, and Emergency Management report to the assistant commissioner.<sup>4</sup> Finally, according to an organizational chart available on the Secretary of State's website (dated 01/01/2025), no divisions or directorates reported to Assistant Commissioner Raymond.<sup>5</sup> Based on interviews conducted in connection with this investigation, the latter appears to be closest to the truth. It appears that toward the end of his tenure as assistant commissioner, nearly all divisions, directorates, and facility wardens within NHDOC reported directly to Commissioner Hanks, and Mr. Raymond was tasked with managing assigned projects and initiatives as well as handling public information officer (PIO) responsibilities. He also appears to have undertaken a significant amount of official travel on behalf of NHDOC.

During her interview with investigators, Commissioner Hanks indicated that there used to be a training program for newly appointed commissioners, deputy commissioners, and assistant commissioners. However, this program no longer appears to exist, and Mr. Raymond seems to have had no formal training—through this program or otherwise—on his role or his responsibilities within the NHDOC organization, including any training on the policies, rules, and laws governing contracting and procurement.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.corrections.nh.gov/about-us/organizational-overview>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.corrections.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt536/files/2023-06/organizational-overview-6-7-no-highlight.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sos.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt561/files/inline-documents/sonh/corrections-department-of-2025.pdf>

Commissioner Hanks told investigators that Mr. Raymond was placed in charge of the Taser 10 project and that it was his largest assigned project as assistant commissioner. At the time, Commissioner Hanks believed Mr. Raymond could handle the project and that he was familiar with State systems, since he had spent so much time with the Department of Safety prior to moving to NHDOC. In retrospect, Commissioner Hanks conceded that Mr. Raymond may have been “over his head” as assistant commissioner and that NHDOC had failed to adequately prepare him for his responsibilities.

### **B. The Shipment of Taser 10 Systems to NHDOC**

All interviewed parties appear to agree that Mr. Raymond was initially placed in charge of NHDOC’s procurement process for new conducted energy weapons. Records indicate that NHDOC was considering updating its Taser systems as early as the summer of 2022. Although a small number of other companies also make conducted energy weapons, Taser was NHDOC’s preference, as NHDOC currently fields Taser X26 systems (within the prison facilities) and Taser 7 systems (within the Field Services Division). Additionally, Taser brand conducted energy weapons would be compatible with the Axon brand body-worn camera (“BWC”) systems recently adopted by NHDOC.<sup>6</sup> It is generally viewed that the Taser X26 systems currently fielded by NHDOC are aged, obsolete, and no longer supported by Axon.

Commissioner Hanks indicated that this type of acquisition project was not new to the agency and that they had previously acquired the aforementioned Axon products, including the earlier Taser models. NHDOC had also previously completed sole source purchases, including for the Taser 7 systems used by Field Services, and initially believed that this process was the

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<sup>6</sup> Taser brand conducted energy weapons automatically activate Axon brand BWCs when the device is removed from its holster or activated. It also appears that NHDOC was also exploring the acquisition of other Axon products, including license plate scanners and anti-drone technology.

correct way to procure the Taser 10 systems as well. Although there appear to have been meetings on the issue, it is unclear to the investigative team why NHDOC ultimately decided on acquiring Taser 10 systems for the whole agency instead of additional Taser 7 systems for inside the prisons, since NHDOC's Taser 7 systems were acquired within the last five years and are still supported by Axon, the Division of Field Services members are currently certified on and equipped with Taser 7 systems, and NHDOC was still paying for its current Taser 7 systems.

In any event, D.G. was the Axon sales representative (hereinafter "D.G." or "the Axon Representative") assigned to liaise with NHDOC regarding the Tasers. In July of 2023, the Axon Representative provided Mr. Raymond and NHDOC employee Scott Young with information on pricing for both Taser 7 and Taser 10 systems. In September of 2023, Mr. Raymond emailed the Axon Representative, writing, "We are moving forward with the [Taser 10] and it will include the Division of Field Services (Probation/Parole)." After a "pause" while Axon resolved issues with NHDOC's BWC roll out, conversations then progressed into a quote request from Mr. Raymond for (110) Taser 10 systems on a 10-year contract. Mr. Raymond ultimately requested a quote for (186) Taser 10 systems.

As alluded to above, records indicate that NHDOC would be seeking a "sole source" exemption allowing them to go directly with Axon regarding the future procurement. In furtherance thereof, it appears that Axon had at some point provided NHDOC with a sole source justification letter dated May 24, 2023, which Mr. Raymond forwarded to NHDOC Contract and Grants Administrator Loretta Razin for review in November of 2023. Axon also provided NHDOC with two quotes, identified as "Q-519288-45205.832DG" and "Q-519288-45205.834DG." There was some internal discussion between Administrator Razin and NHDOC Director of Administration Lisa Stone about whether these quotes represented a purchase or a

lease. On November 20, 2023, Director Stone indicated in an email that she believed the contract would “likely” need to go to the G&C for approval. It does not appear that Mr. Raymond was copied or otherwise included on Director Stone’s email. Nevertheless, Director Stone recalled a conversation in which she informed Mr. Raymond of this fact, though it may have occurred after the Taser 10 systems were already delivered.

On November 27, 2023, the Axon Representative provided Mr. Raymond with an updated quote as well as purchase order (PO) requirements. This quote, identified as “Q-519128-45257.902DG,” is dated 11/27/23 and notionally expired on 12/1/23. The total cost was \$1,967,574.89, and the quote listed NHDOC employee Scott Young as the NHDOC point of contact. The Axon Representative instructed Mr. Raymond that in order to “process this quote to get your agency in the que[ue] for the T10s,” NHDOC needed to submit **either** a “purchase order” meeting certain requirements **or** a letter on agency letterhead. According to the Axon Representative’s email, if Mr. Raymond elected to submit a letter in lieu of a purchase order, the letter needed to: (a) acknowledge that Mr. Raymond was assistant commissioner; (b) reference the request for (192) Taser 10 systems, including quantity/amount/quote number; (c) indicate that the request is “for official agency use pursuant to a law enforcement agency transfer under the gun control act of 1968;” and (d) be signed with a wet signature.

Mr. Raymond authored and signed the requested letter on NHDOC letterhead. It is dated November 28, 2023, and stated:

Please accept this letter as a purchase intent for new Axon Taser 10. The Department intends to purchase these Tasers under an updated agreement with Axon. These Tasers will be used for official agency use pursuant to a law enforcement agency transfer under the Gun Control Act of 1968.

The Department intends to purchase one hundred ninety-two (192) Taser 10s over a 10-year purchase agreement for a total of \$1,967,574.89 (in accordance with

Axon quote # Q-519128-4527.902DG) so long as sustaining legislative funding is provided to the Department for the life of the contract.

(Emphasis added). Records indicate that Mr. Raymond sent the Axon Representative this letter via email on November 28, 2023. The Axon Representative acknowledged receipt the same day and then followed up with another email requesting freight information. That evening, the Axon Representative also requested that Mr. Raymond sign the quote. Mr. Raymond apparently did not respond, so the Axon Representative followed up on November 30, 2023, again asking Mr. Raymond to sign the quote. Mr. Raymond signed the quote on December 1, 2023, and returned it to the Axon Representative via email the same day. Of note, the signed quote mandated that:

Any purchase order issued in response to this Quote is subject to the above referenced terms and conditions. By signing below, you represent that you are lawfully able to enter into contracts. If you are signing on behalf of an entity (including but not limited to the . . . government agency for whom you work), you represent to Axon that you have legal authority to bind that entity. If you do not have this authority, please do not sign this quote.

(Emphasis added). Thus, the plain language of both the letter and the signed quote indicate that neither was intended to serve as a purchase order for Taser 10 systems. Discussions with NHDOC determined that as assistant commissioner, Mr. Raymond possessed power of attorney to sign on behalf of the agency in certain circumstances.

The investigation did not find any record of any purchase order, shipping order, or freight information being sent to Axon concerning the Taser 10 systems. However, in an interview with this Office, NHDOC employee Scott Young told investigators that at the direction of Mr. Raymond, Mr. Young had called the Axon Representative and informed him that it was okay to ship the Taser 10 systems. Mr. Young did not recall precisely when that call occurred but believed it was in December of 2023 or January of 2024. For its part, Axon claimed in a written interrogatory response that it received a purchase order “on or around March 18, 2024,” though

the investigative team and NHDOC were unable to locate any record of a formal written purchase order and were not provided a copy by Axon, despite requests for the same.

In an interview with a DOJ investigator, the Axon Representative represented that the Taser 10 systems were shipped with the understanding that funding was contingent upon approval by the G&C. The Axon Representative also indicated that it is not uncommon for State agencies to opt out of a contract with Axon when funding is not approved or falls through. He was clear that nothing was promised by NHDOC to cause the shipping of the Taser 10 systems. While the Axon Representative conceded that it was unusual for the Taser 10 systems to sit in NHDOC's warehouse for a year while waiting on funding to be approved, he opined that they were not shipped back due to the cost, and that there was hope that a contract would ultimately be approved.

In a draft letter to the G&C that was dated May 16, 2025, but never sent,<sup>7</sup> Mr. Raymond explained, in part:

In a November 27, 2023, email from [D.G.], the Axon Representative working with the Department of Corrections, he stated, in part, "process this quote to get your agency in the que [sp] for the T10s." On December 1, 2023, I signed an Axon quote (#Q-51928-4527.902DG) and issued a letter of intent to purchase. I recently learned through the Department's review of this incident that after I signed the quote and letter, Axon initiated the process of shipping the Tasers to the New Hampshire Department of Corrections.

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At the time, I did not understand that my signature on that quote or the letter would authorize or initiate the shipment of the Tasers. My intent was solely to secure the pricing and reserve the Department's place in the T10 queue as the procurement and contracting process progressed. After the correction from Director Stone, I was clear in my discussion with Axon representatives, including [D.G.], that before the Department could purchase these Tasers, contract approval was required through the Executive Council and, if approved, it would be contingent upon allocated funding for the life of the contract through the legislature.

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<sup>7</sup> The letter bears a handwritten note, "Per AG's office: Do not send due to PIU investigation 5/16/25."

As a newer Assistant Commissioner at that time, I did not fully appreciate the implications of my actions.

The Taser 10 systems were delivered to NHDOC on April 11, 2024. Packing slips indicate that (192) Taser 10 systems were enclosed with the shipment, and the point of contact was listed as Scott Young. NHDOC employee Tanya Wilson signed for the delivery, and the Taser 10 systems were secured in NHDOC's warehouse. On April 23, 2024, in response to the Taser 10 systems being delivered, Director Stone requested that the Axon Representative provide "any documents signed by the Department for Tasers." The Axon Representative responded and provided both the signed quote and Raymond's letter of intent to purchase. Notably, the Axon Representative did not provide Director Stone with any signed purchase order.

Mr. Raymond claimed to be surprised by the delivery of the Taser 10 systems. In an internal email dated April 12, 2024, Mr. Raymond reported, "The Axon T10 Tasers were delivered this week. Unexpectedly. Now we need to develop a deployment plan ASAP so they aren't sitting in the warehouse or armory for months." Ultimately, the Taser 10 systems were not issued while NHDOC worked to secure financing. While there were rumors that Mr. Raymond removed Taser 10 systems from the warehouse and/or that some were activated, the investigation determined that all (192) Taser 10 systems were accounted for and were never activated or placed into service.

### **C. The Taser 10 Contracting/Procurement Process**

Mr. Raymond asserted in writing that he and Contracts Administrator Razin believed that, because of a class exemption in place, they could procure the Taser 10 systems through a sole source contract approved by the Department of Administrative Services ("DAS"). Mr. Raymond indicated that Director Stone informed them that the exemption had expired and the

project would therefore need G&C approval, though he could not recall if this occurred before or after he signed the quote and letter of intent to purchase. Mr. Raymond's assertion has some support in a chain of emails between Administrator Razin and Director Stone in November of 2023, in which they discuss whether the project would require G&C approval. As described in more detail above, Director Stone asserted in that email chain that G&C approval was "likely" required for the project. Additionally, in an interview with this Office, Director Stone recalled a conversation with Mr. Raymond in which she told him he could not "just order stuff like that," and that when she told him the project needed to go to G&C, Mr. Raymond responded that it did not have to "because it was a straight purchase." Director Stone allegedly informed Mr. Raymond that the Manual of Procedures ("MOP") had changed to require G&C approval.<sup>8</sup>

On May 29, 2024, Mr. Raymond emailed the Axon Representative to request an example of a sole source letter for Taser 10 systems. The Axon Representative responded and provided an example, which was ultimately included in NHDOC's package for G&C consideration. On or about June 6, 2024, NHDOC prepared a sole source justification letter for the Taser 10 systems. On June 20, 2024, Director Stone prepared and submitted a request for waiver of competitive bid, which was approved by both DAS Division of Procurement Director Gary Lunetta and DAS Commissioner Charles Arlinghaus on June 24, 2024.

On July 10, 2024, a request for sole source purchase was submitted by NHDOC to the G&C for consideration as Item #34 on the agenda. This package, which is publicly available, included a cover letter signed by Commissioner Hanks, an updated Axon quote "Q-519128-

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<sup>8</sup> Director Stone explained that the Taser 7 systems acquired by NHDOC four years ago were obtained through a class exemption executed through a statewide purchase by the Department of Administrative Services ("DAS"). A 2023 change to the MOP made DAS multiagency commodity and service contracts totaling more than \$250,000 require G&C approval. See MOP 150. Leases and other service contracts or purchases exceeding \$10,000 have always required G&C approval. See id.

45261.914JC” issued on June 12, 2024 (120 months @ \$1,967,574.89), the aforementioned sole source justification letter, and the DAS-approved waiver of competitive bid.<sup>9</sup>

NHDOC’s sole source purchase request was considered at the July 24, 2024, G&C meeting. Mr. Raymond testified at the hearing in support of the request. In response to questioning, Mr. Raymond represented to the G&C that Axon was the only company that made conducted energy weapons and that Axon products were compatible with NHDOC’s existing BWC systems. In response to further questioning by members of the Council, Governor Sununu suggested that the G&C table the request to allow NHDOC additional time to answer any remaining questions. At no time during the hearing did Mr. Raymond inform the G&C that the Taser 10 systems were at that point already sitting in NHDOC’s warehouse.

NHDOC’s sole source purchase request was considered again at the August 7, 2024, G&C meeting. Commissioner Hanks was present at this meeting and indicated that NHDOC was willing to withdraw the item from consideration and to come back with a different proposal. Accordingly, without objection from NHDOC, the request for a sole-source purchase failed.

From this point on, Mr. Raymond appears to no longer be deeply involved with the Taser 10 acquisition process, though at times he was consulted as to why certain decisions were previously made. On November 18, 2024, Director Stone informed the Axon Representative that NHDOC had decided to move forward with a competitive request for proposal (“RFP”) process and requested that the Axon Representative arrange to retrieve the Taser 10 systems. On November 21, 2024, after further back and forth in which NHDOC and Axon exchanged redlined agreements and an updated quote that was higher than expected, Director Stone again informed the Axon Representative that NHDOC had decided to post an RFP. The next day,

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<sup>9</sup> Available at: <https://media.sos.nh.gov/govcouncil/2024/0724/34%20GC%20Agenda%20072424.pdf>

NHDOC issued an RFP for Conducted Energy Weapons, “RFP NH DOC 2025-14,” with a closing date of December 20, 2024.<sup>10</sup> This RFP solicited bids for a five-year lease (with an additional five-year option) of 195 conducted energy weapons. An addendum was issued on December 3, 2024, clarifying New Hampshire’s definition of a “lease” as opposed to a “purchase.”<sup>11</sup> A requirement of the RFP was that the conducted energy weapon be compatible with and automatically activate NHDOC’s current Axon BWCs.

On January 29, 2025, and February 3, 2025, Axon employee W.K. emailed NHDOC employee Scott Young seeking to coordinate the return of the Taser 10 systems. On February 3, 2025, the Axon Representative responded to both W.K. and Mr. Young, requesting to hold off on the return as the Axon Representative was working with Director Stone and NHDOC to possibly keep the equipment in place if they could obtain approval through the RFP process.

On March 25, 2025, NHDOC submitted the results of its RFP process to the G&C for consideration and approval. This package, which is publicly available on the Secretary of State’s website, included a cover letter dated March 25, 2025, and signed by Commissioner Hanks; an updated Axon Quote “Q-643139-45734.693DG,” issued on 3/18/25 (120 months @ \$2,099,998.84); a proposed lease agreement and exhibits signed by both the Axon Deputy General Counsel and Commissioner Hanks; an April 3, 2025, letter from State Treasurer Monica Mezzapelle finding the proposed lease arrangement commercially reasonable; and a number of other RFP and contract related documents.<sup>12</sup> For reasons that are not clear, Mr. Raymond is listed as the primary point of contact on the quote, even though at this point Director Stone and

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<sup>10</sup> Available at: <https://www.corrections.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt536/files/documents/nhdoc-2025-14-cew-lease-agreement.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Available at: <https://www.corrections.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt536/files/documents/rfp-addendum1.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Available at: <https://media.sos.nh.gov/govcouncil/2025/0423/054%20GC%20Agenda%20042325.pdf>

Grants Administrator Razin appeared to have taken over the project. Notably, the submission contained an “RFP Bid Evaluation and Summary,” indicating that the RFP was evaluated by Commissioner Hanks, Director Stone, and Training Administrator Michael Edmark; Mr. Raymond is NOT documented as reviewing or evaluating the RFP responses.

On April 23, 2025, the G&C considered NHDOC’s request, which was docketed as Item #54 on the agenda.<sup>13</sup> During the meeting, at which NHDOC was represented by Commissioner Hanks, some members of the Executive Council expressed skepticism about both the cost of the proposed procurement as well as the fairness of the underlying RFP process. Specifically, some doubts were expressed about whether Axon’s competitors were adequately contacted and made aware of the open RFP, and whether it was truly necessary for any adopted conducted energy weapons to be compatible with NHDOC’s BWCs. Stated another way, it was suggested that NHDOC’s proposal was essentially a sole source contract disguised as a competitive RFP. Ultimately, the matter was tabled so that NHDOC could provide the G&C with additional information and documents relating to the RFP process.

On April 23, 2025, Director Stone emailed the Axon Representative seeking the cost to purchase 195 Taser 10 systems. The Axon Representative responded that he could not provide the exact number, but that it would be higher than what was presently quoted to NHDOC.

On April 24, 2025, the Axon Representative emailed Director Stone to inquire into how the G&C vote went. When he was informed that the item was “tabled,” the Axon Representative responded, “What does that mean? I’m going to need to return those other Tasers and we’re going to have to start this all over again from scratch I’m getting pressure from my executive team.” However, a return of the Taser 10 systems was not initiated at this point.

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<sup>13</sup> Video of this meeting is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cb4jTi000hM>

The Executive Council met again on May 7, 2025.<sup>14</sup> During this meeting, based on RFP documentation and emails provided by NHDOC, an Executive Councilor apologized for having had apparently inaccurate information about NHDOC's efforts to contact Axon's competitors about the RFP. Nevertheless, based largely on the cost of the proposed procurement, NHDOC's request failed to pass.

On May 7, 2025, Director Stone emailed the Axon Representative to inform him that the Executive Council had voted down the proposed contract. In follow up emails, the two discussed outstanding payments for Taser 7 systems previously acquired by NHDOC, as well the logistics of returning the Taser 10 systems in NHDOC's warehouse. On May 19, 2025, Commissioner Hanks resigned, and Mr. Raymond was placed on administrative leave.<sup>15</sup> On May 20, 2025, the Taser 10 systems were inventoried and shipped back to Axon. All Taser 10 systems were accounted for, and Axon bore the cost of shipping. The return shipment was coordinated and approved by attorneys in this Office's Civil Law Bureau. Neither NHDOC nor the State of New Hampshire owe Axon any balance on the Taser 10 systems.

**D. Assistant Commissioner Raymond's Association with Axon Representatives and His Travel to Axon Events**

A review of emails between Axon employees and Mr. Raymond during this investigation revealed that there was an existing familiarity between Mr. Raymond and these employees. For example, emails from between November 1, 2023, and December 4, 2023, show Axon employees and Mr. Raymond discussing plans for Mr. Raymond and the NHDOC Chief Information Officer (CIO) to attend the Axon CEO Leadership Tech Summit from December 4–5, 2023. These emails often alternate between discussing quotes for the Taser 10 systems and

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<sup>14</sup> Video of this meeting is available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGMhxC\\_jyBU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGMhxC_jyBU)

<sup>15</sup> Mr. Raymond subsequently resigned from NHDOC on July 25, 2025.

travel arrangements for the Axon-funded trip. The cost of the 2023 Summit amounted to about \$1,430, and Mr. Raymond obtained Commissioner Hanks's written approval to travel and completed the appropriate expense reimbursement forms with the N.H. Secretary of State's office upon return. See RSA 15-B:6. Mr. Raymond (and the NHDOC CIO) also attended this conference for a second time in October of 2024, while the purchase/procurement discussions were in progress between NHDOC and Axon, but before the RFP was formally open (from 11/22/24-12/20/24). As with the previous year's summit, Mr. Raymond obtained Commissioner Hanks' written approval to travel to this event and completed the required expense reimbursement form with the N.H. Secretary of State's office.<sup>16</sup>

Of note are the multiple communications that highlight the friendly relationship between Mr. Raymond and the Axon Representative. For example, in one November 30, 2023, email in which the Axon Representative requested that Mr. Raymond sign a quote, the Axon Representative also referenced meeting up to socialize and offered to coordinate "drinks" between Mr. Raymond, the NHDOC CIO, and selected other CEO Summit attendees.

On August 19, 2024, Mr. Raymond corresponded with the Axon Representative via email, stating "it was good to see you this past week/weekend in Nashville. Thanks for you and the Axon team's patience as we work through a number of projects." Mr. Raymond also informed the Axon Representative that he would be attending the National Information Officers Association conference the following week in Clearwater, FL, as well as the CLA Northeast Regional Meeting<sup>17</sup> in Stowe, VT, in September. The Axon Representative responded, indicating that he would also be at the CLA meeting in Vermont.

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<sup>16</sup> Records indicate that the NHDOC CIO also completed and submitted the required expense reimbursement reports.

<sup>17</sup> This is assumed to be the Correctional Leaders Association, an organization that hosted events to which Mr. Raymond had travelled in an official capacity.

Also discovered during the investigation were a number of documents and emails relating to a daylong “Axon Roadshow” event presented by Axon and hosted at NHDOC facilities in Concord in October 2024. This roadshow, like many hosted at law enforcement agencies around the country, brought together NHDOC personnel and other law enforcement agencies to sample/demo Axon law enforcement products. Media was apparently invited to attend the event, leading to the possible inference that hosting the roadshow allowed Axon to increase its publicity by associating the company with NHDOC and New Hampshire law enforcement. However, it should be noted that Axon routinely hosts roadshows at law enforcement agencies around the country and publicizes those roadshows on both its website and social media. For example, Axon roadshows were also hosted at the Portsmouth Police Department in October of 2024 (three days before the event at NHDOC) and in August of 2025. Both were publicized on the internet and social media.

Finally, the investigation revealed that Mr. Raymond traveled on behalf of NHDOC to attend other training events, seminars, and/or conferences throughout the summer and fall of 2024. These other trips, however, do not appear to have been associated with or sponsored by Axon.

**E. Assistant Commissioner Raymond’s Written Employment Recommendation for a Personal Friend**

During the investigation, it was also discovered that on December 11, 2023—right after returning from his first Axon CEO summit and during the pendency of negotiations concerning the Taser 10 systems—Mr. Raymond utilized his official NHDOC email to forward a personal friend’s resume to two Axon employees, noting that this friend had applied for an account executive position at Axon’s Boston office. In the email, Mr. Raymond began, “Last week reaffirmed for me that [NHDOC] has made the right decision in partnering with Axon for less

than lethal technology and virtual reality training opportunities.” Mr. Raymond continued, “I look forward to the continued partnership between NHDOC and Axon.” Mr. Raymond then asked the Axon employees to “[p]lease accept this email as a personal reference for [the friend] and forward this to the appropriate people on your team.” During the PIU’s investigation, it was confirmed that this friend was ultimately not hired by Axon.

### **III. ANALYSIS**

#### **A. Standard of Review**

Pursuant to its written public integrity protocols,<sup>18</sup> during a preliminary review the PIU first determines, based on the information provided with a complaint as well as information obtained by the PIU, whether there is reasonable suspicion to believe that further investigation would lead to probable cause that a crime was committed. If this standard is met, the PIU will open a formal criminal investigation. After evidence is collected through a formal criminal investigation, the PIU then determines, consistent with its prosecutorial obligations, whether there is sufficient evidence to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that a crime occurred. This standard was applied to a review of the materials and information gathered during this investigation.

#### **B. Relevant Statutory Framework**

##### **RSA 21-G:22 Conflict of Interest. –**

Executive branch officials and classified employees shall avoid conflicts of interest. Executive branch officials and classified employees shall not participate in any matter in which they, or their spouse or dependents, have a private interest which may directly or indirectly affect or influence the performance of their duties.

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<sup>18</sup> See Attorney General Memo re: Public Integrity Matters (Oct. 11, 2021), available at: <https://mm.nh.gov/files/uploads/doj/remote-docs/public-integrity.pdf>

A “conflict of interest” is defined as “a situation, circumstance, or financial interest which has the potential to cause a private interest to interfere with the proper exercise of a public duty.”

See RSA 21-G:21, II. As Assistant Commissioner, Raymond meets the definition of an “executive branch official.” See RSA 21-G:21, II-a.

**21-G:23 Misuse of Position. –**

No executive branch official or classified employee shall:

I. Disclose or use confidential or privileged information acquired in the performance of his or her duties for the state for personal benefit or for financial gain.

II. Use his or her position with the state to secure privileges or advantages for himself or herself, which are not generally available to governmental employees, or to secure governmental privileges or advantages for others to which they are not otherwise entitled.

**RSA 21-G:34 Penalty. –**

I. Any person who knowingly or willfully violates RSA 21-G:22 [or RSA-G:23] . . . shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and may be subject to disciplinary action as provided in RSA 21-G:31, III(d) and other applicable law.

II. In the case of any person convicted under this section, the court may order restitution.

**RSA 21-G:38 Ethics. –**

I. From the time the bid is published until a contract is awarded, no bidder shall offer or give, directly or indirectly, any gift, expense reimbursement, or honorarium, as defined by RSA 15-B, to any elected official, public official, public employee, constitutional official, or family member of any such official or employee who will select, evaluate, or award an RFB, RFP, RFA, or similar request for submission. Any bidder that violates this section shall be subject to prosecution for an offense under RSA 640:2. Every RFB, RFP, RFA, or similar request for submissions issued by any state agency shall contain a provision stating that any bidder who has been convicted of an offense based on conduct in violation of this section, which has not been annulled, or who is subject to a pending criminal charge for such an offense, shall be disqualified from bidding on the RFB, RFP, RFA, or similar request for submission and every such bidder shall be disqualified from bidding on any RFB, RFP, RFA, or similar request for submission issued by any state agency. An agency which becomes aware of any such charge or conviction

shall notify the department of administrative services, which department shall maintain a list of vendors reported to it and make that list available for agency reference on the state's internal intranet system. A bidder that was disqualified under this section because of a pending criminal charge which is subsequently dismissed, results in an acquittal, or is annulled, may notify the department of administrative services, which shall note that information on the list maintained on the state's internal intranet system, except that in the case of annulment, the information shall be deleted from the list.

II. No elected official, public official, public employee, constitutional official, or family member of any such official or employee who was, is, or will be involved in the selection, evaluation, or award of an RFB, RFP, RFA, or similar request for submission, shall accept any gift, expense reimbursement, or honorarium, as defined in RSA 15-B, from a bidder.

III. Each agency and executive branch official and employee shall avoid any situation that might constitute a conflict of interest, misuse of position, or otherwise violate the code of ethics under RSA 21-G:21-27.

**RSA 15-B:3 Prohibition on Gifts. –**

I. It shall be unlawful to knowingly give any gift as defined in this chapter, directly or indirectly, to any elected official, public official, public employee, or constitutional official.

II. It shall be unlawful to knowingly give any gift as defined in this chapter, directly or indirectly, to any family member, as defined in this chapter, of any elected official, public official, public employee, or constitutional official with a purpose of influencing or affecting the official conduct of such official or employee.

III. No elected official, public official, public employee, or constitutional official shall knowingly accept, directly or indirectly, any gift, as defined in this chapter.

While the term “gift” is broadly defined in the statute, see RSA 15-B:2, V(a), there are a number of exceptions, including “[m]eals, beverages, lodging, or transportation associated with attendance . . . at [a]ny event where the person is attending in an official capacity representing

the state or the agency of which the person is a member” or an “[e]xpense reimbursement or an honorarium,” see RSA 15-B:2, V(b)(10) and (11).

**RSA 15-B:4 Limitation on Receipt of an Honorarium. –**

No public official or public employee shall accept an honorarium from a person who is subject to or likely to become subject to or interested in any matter or action pending before, or contemplated by, the public official, public employee, or the governmental body with which that person is affiliated.

**RSA 15-B:5 Expense Reimbursement. –**

An elected official, public official, public employee, or constitutional official may accept expense reimbursement for the reasonable expenses for attendance, registration, travel, meals, and lodging for a bona fide conference, meeting, seminar, or educational or informational program which the person attends and that is related to the office, position, or employment held with the state or county, provided that the person attaches to the disclosure report a copy of the agenda or an equivalent document which discloses the subjects addressed and the time schedule of all activities at the event. This provision shall not be construed to require reporting of an expense reimbursement made by an organization to which the state or county pays dues, when the prepayment, underwriting or reimbursement is provided because of the dues paid.

**RSA 15-B:6 Duty to Report. –**

An elected official, public official, or public employee who receives an honorarium or expense reimbursement shall file a report with the secretary of state no later than the last day of the month following the month during which the honorarium or expense reimbursement was received.

**RSA 15-B:9 Penalty. –**

Any person who knowingly fails to comply with the provisions of this chapter or knowingly files a false report shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. It shall be an absolute defense in any prosecution under this chapter that the person acted in reliance upon an advisory opinion on the subject issued under RSA 14-B:3, I(c) or RSA 21-G:30, I(c).

**RSA 640:5 Gifts to Public Servants. –**

A person is guilty of a misdemeanor if:

I. Being a public servant he solicits, accepts or agrees to accept any pecuniary benefit from a person who is or is likely to become subject to or interested in any

matter or action pending before or contemplated by himself or the governmental body with which he is affiliated; or

II. He knowingly gives, offers, or promises any pecuniary benefit prohibited by paragraph I.

A “pecuniary benefit” is defined as “any advantage in the form of money, property, commercial interest or anything else, the primary significance of which is economic gain.” RSA 640:2, II(c).

A pecuniary benefit “does not include economic advantage applicable to the public generally . . .” *Id.* Moreover, nothing in RSA Chapter 640 “shall be construed to prohibit the giving or receiving of any other thing exempt from the prohibition on gifts pursuant to RSA 15-B.” RSA 640:1.

**RSA 643:1 Official Oppression. –**

A public servant, as defined in RSA 640:2, II, is guilty of a misdemeanor if, with a purpose to benefit himself or another or to harm another, he knowingly commits an unauthorized act which purports to be an act of his office; or knowingly refrains from performing a duty imposed on him by law or clearly inherent in the nature of his office.

A person “acting ‘with a purpose to benefit himself,’ . . . must seek a specific advantage or gain that is more than a momentary or fleeting personal, emotional, or psychological benefit.” *State v. Sargent*, 176 N.H. 713, 719 (2024) (construing RSA 643:1). “[S]omeone who acts ‘with a purpose to benefit himself or another,’ . . . acts with a purpose to obtain a specific advantage, or to advance or improve his or her situation or that of another.” *Id.*

**C. Application**

As a threshold matter, the PIU reviewed Mr. Raymond’s conduct to determine whether he had committed any crimes in connection with the Taser 10 procurement process. The PIU did not evaluate—and offers no opinion on—whether Mr. Raymond may have committed any non-

criminal ethics violations or violated any State of New Hampshire or NHDOC policies. Those assessments are not within the PIU's purview.

*i. Executive Branch Code of Ethics – Potential Conflict of Interest and Misuse of Position*

This Office first evaluated whether Mr. Raymond's relationship with Axon generally, and the Axon Representative specifically, presented a criminal conflict of interest in violation of the Executive Branch Code of Ethics. See RSA 21-G:22; RSA 21-G:34. As set forth above, New Hampshire law requires that Executive Branch officials avoid situations, circumstances, or financial interests which have "the potential to cause a private interest to interfere with the proper exercise of a public duty." See RSA 21-G:22; RSA 21-G:21, II. Knowing or willful violations of this section are punishable as a misdemeanor. See RSA 21-G:34.

It is true that Mr. Raymond undoubtedly appears to have had a close working relationship with the Axon Representative, including meeting up socially while traveling at various professional conferences. It is also true that Axon paid for Mr. Raymond to attend at least two CEO summits and that during Mr. Raymond's tenure as assistant commissioner, NHDOC hosted an Axon roadshow at NHDOC facilities in New Hampshire. However, it is also worth noting that NHDOC as an organization appears to have an established and close working relationship with Axon, which is unsurprising given the number of Axon products NHDOC has procured, is in the process of procuring, or is exploring procuring. Axon is a major law enforcement technology distributor that markets and sells a number of products relevant to corrections, including conducted energy weapons, body worn cameras, and anti-drone technology. Indeed, Axon's conducted energy weapons are so ubiquitous and widely-adopted by law enforcement agencies across the country that its trade name—Taser—is often erroneously applied to broadly refer to all conducted energy weapons. It should therefore be unsurprising that some degree of

familiarity exists between NHDOC officials and employees and Axon sales representatives. Given this existing relationship, it was not unusual for Mr. Raymond and other NHDOC employees to be familiar with and appear to prefer acquiring and using Axon products. The fact that Mr. Raymond attempted a sole source procurement process or executed documents in furtherance of the acquisition of Taser 10 systems is not particularly compelling evidence of a criminal conflict of interest, given that NHDOC's Taser 7 systems were recently procured from Axon through a non-competitive process, and that NHDOC had also previously procured Taser X26 systems and BWCs from Axon.

Moreover, in addition to Mr. Raymond, Axon hosted other NHDOC employees at its CEO summits in 2023 and 2024, which appear to be tailored toward and attended by law enforcement and corrections executives from all around the country. Further, Axon routinely conducts roadshows at law enforcement agencies throughout the country, including two recent shows hosted in New Hampshire by the Portsmouth Police Department in 2024 and 2025. Indeed, these CEO summits and road shows appear to be a major component of Axon's marketing and education strategy. Given the totality of these circumstances, this Office concluded that it could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Raymond had a criminal conflict of interest in violation of RSA 21-G:22 and RSA 21-G:34.

This Office also evaluated whether Mr. Raymond's use of his official NHDOC email to endorse and recommend a friend for employment with Axon, while Axon was in informal negotiations with NHDOC, constituted a criminal misuse of position in violation of RSA 21-G:23 and RSA 21-G:34. Relevant here, together these statutes make it a misdemeanor for any Executive Branch official to "knowingly or willfully" "[u]se his or her position with the state to secure privileges or advantages for himself or herself, which are not generally available to

governmental employees, or to secure *governmental privileges or advantages for others* to which they are not otherwise entitled” (emphasis added). See RSA 21-G:23; RSA 21-G:34. Here, through the use of his official email, Mr. Raymond was implicitly using his position to solicit an advantage for his friend. Although Mr. Raymond’s recommendation occurred in the same email as discussions about Axon products, the two were not linked together and no *quid pro quo* was explicitly proposed or implied. Thus, while the use of official email to provide an endorsement for employment arguably constitutes a technical violation of RSA 21-G:23, as an official endorsement is a government advantage, the investigation uncovered no evidence that Mr. Raymond did anything more than provide an otherwise permissible endorsement – i.e., a personal endorsement of a friend – through an improper communication channel.

Taking all of the facts and circumstances into account, while Mr. Raymond’s conduct in sending this email may be found to be a technical violation of RSA 21-G:23 and thus a non-criminal ethics violation, or may violate State or NHDOC policies governing the use of official email, this Office concluded that it could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Raymond knowingly or willfully committed criminal misuse of position, in violation of RSA 21-G:23 and RSA 21-G:34.

#### *ii. Gifts and Expense Reimbursements*

Finally, this Office evaluated whether Mr. Raymond’s acceptance of paid trips to two Axon CEO summits in 2023 and 2024 violated New Hampshire law by being unlawful gifts or expense reimbursements. For the reasons that follow, this Office concluded that it could not

prove that Mr. Raymond committed a crime beyond a reasonable doubt in connection with this conduct.

As set out above, the offering and acceptance of gifts by public officials is governed by a number of overlapping statutory provisions. RSA 640:5 makes it a crime for any public servant to solicit, accept or agree to accept “any pecuniary benefit from a person who is or is likely to become subject to or interested in any matter or action pending before or contemplated by himself or the governmental body with which he is affiliated.” On its face, this statute is broad in both of the type of benefit prohibited and the proscribed timing of the benefit. Thus, read in isolation, it would appear that Mr. Raymond’s acceptance of paid travel from Axon in 2023 and 2024 to attend CEO summits, while Axon was in both informal and formal negotiations with NHDOC, would violate this statute and constitute a misdemeanor offense.

However, the giving and receiving of gifts by and to public officials is also regulated by RSA Chapter 15-B and RSA 21-G. See, e.g., RSA 640:1 (excluding from the scope of RSA Chapter 640 “the giving or receiving of any thing exempt from the prohibition on gifts pursuant to RSA 15-B”). For example, RSA 15-B:3, III, generally bans the acceptance of “gifts” by elected officials, public officials, public employees, and constitutional officials. Nevertheless, the chapter explicitly excludes from the definition of “gift” the cost of any “[m]eals beverages, lodging, or transportation associated with attendance at . . . [a]ny event where the person is attending in an official capacity representing the state or the agency of which the person is a member” as well as an “expense reimbursement or an honorarium.” RSA 15-B:2, V(b)(10) and (11).

Moreover, “[a]n elected official, public official, public employee, or constitutional official may accept expense reimbursement for the reasonable expenses for attendance,

registration, travel, meals, and lodging for a bona fide conference, meeting, seminar, or educational or informational program which the person attends and that is related to the office, position, or employment held with the state or county, provided that the person attaches to the disclosure report a copy of the agenda or an equivalent document which discloses the subjects addressed and the time schedule of all activities at the event.” RSA 15-B:5; see also RSA 15-B:6 (creating a duty to report expense reimbursements). Nonetheless, “[n]o elected official, public official, public employee, constitutional official, or family member of any such official or employee who was, is, or will be involved in the selection, evaluation, or award of an RFB, RFP, RFA, or similar request for submission, shall accept any gift, expense reimbursement, or honorarium, as defined in RSA 15-B, from a bidder.” RSA 21-G:38.

Here, given that: (1) Mr. Raymond had written approval from Commissioner Hanks to travel to both Axon CEO summits; (2) Mr. Raymond’s travel was connected with and in furtherance of his official duties; and (3) Mr. Raymond filed the required expense reimbursement forms after travel, this Office concluded that it could not prove a knowing violation of RSA 640:5 beyond a reasonable doubt. Given Mr. Raymond’s substantial compliance with NHDOC travel policies and RSA Chapter 15, this Office determined it could not prove a criminal *mens rea*. Stated another way, it would be difficult to prove that a government official who complied with his agency’s travel policy, obtained written permission to travel from the head of the agency, and complied with the State’s ethics statute in reporting the travel knowingly committed a criminal offense. See RSA 640:1.

Finally, RSA 21-G:38 merits discussion. As described above, this statute bans all gifts, expense reimbursements, and honorariums for government officials who are involved in competitive bid processes. It is worth noting that this statute provides for no criminal penalty for

a violation by an elected official, public official, public employee, constitutional official, or family member of such. See generally RSA 21-G:38; see also RSA 21-G:34 (providing criminal penalties for violations of RSA 21-G:21 through :27 and :31, but not for violations of RSA 21-G:38). Arguably, one could make the case that a violation of RSA 21-G:38 could create criminal liability for Official Oppression. See RSA 643:1. Nevertheless, given that Mr. Raymond's travel and expense reimbursements were completed before NHDOC formally put the conducted energy weapons RFP out to bid in December 2024 and before the agency formally solicited or accepted proposals, and given that Mr. Raymond was not involved in reviewing, evaluating, selecting, and awarding the contract to Axon in connection with the competitive bid process, this Office concluded that it could not prove a criminal violation of RSA 21-G:38 beyond a reasonable doubt.

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

The AGO concludes that the shipment of Taser 10 systems to NHDOC was the result of a lack of relevant training and experience on the part of Mr. Raymond, and not because of any criminal intent on his part or the part of any other NHDOC or Axon employee. Instead, it appears that Mr. Raymond's attempts to negotiate and secure a sole source contract with Axon for Taser 10 systems were influenced by the following factors: (1) his familiarity with Axon products and knowledge of NHDOC's previous sole source purchase of Taser 7 systems through a class exemption; (2) reliance on a DAS class exemption that no longer existed; (3) an unfamiliarity with the requirements of the Manual of Procedure as well as State and NHDOC contracting and procurement processes generally; (4) a mistaken belief that Axon was the sole producer of conducted energy weapons; and (5) an apparently good faith desire to facilitate integration between the adopted conducted energy weapons and NHDOC's recently procured

Axon BWCs. The available evidence supports Mr. Raymond's assertions that neither his execution of a letter of intent to purchase nor signature on an Axon quote were intended to bind the State of New Hampshire nor expend funds without the requisite G&C approval.

Additionally, consistent with the foregoing, the AGO concludes that it could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Mr. Raymond knowingly committed any crimes in connection with the Taser 10 procurement process, his relationship and communications with Axon representatives, or his official travel to Axon-sponsored events.