

**Virginia Beach Sheriff Rocky Holcomb announces updates to jail policies,  
procedures, operations following June 2024 death of former inmate**

**NEWS RELEASE**

Jan. 24, 2025

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. – Sheriff Rocky Holcomb today announced a comprehensive series of changes to Virginia Beach Correctional Center (VBCC) policies, procedures and operations following the June 2024 death of former inmate Rolin Hill.

Holcomb and the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office (VBSO) have been proactive in responding to this incident, including immediately requesting an independent third-party investigation by the Virginia State Police (VSP), which ultimately led to the indictment of three former deputies. They have also taken the following actions:

- Immediately placed five deputies on administrative leave and terminated their employment on Oct. 18 due to failure to comply with VBSO policy. Three of the five former deputies were indicted on criminal charges by a special grand jury on Jan. 3.
- Holcomb met with all sworn deputies to reinforce his standards and expectations, reiterate the VBSO's policies on use of force/response to resistance and duty to intervene, and ensure they understand they are expected to uphold the public's trust and the VBSO values of commitment, integrity, compassion and professionalism in the execution of their duties.
- Reviewed and updated relevant policies and procedures, including:
  - requiring arresting officers to remove any "wrap" restraints from arrestees prior to entering VBSO custody;
  - removing wraps from the list of restraints permitted to be used inside the Virginia Beach Correctional Center;
  - requiring the appointment of a staff member to serve as an inmate advocate in any serious use of force/response to resistance incident; and

- requiring a captain to review the body-worn camera footage from all use of force/response to resistance incidents.
- Resurrected the rank of major to improve jail oversight and promoting Maj. Joseph Bartolomeo to the role effective Nov. 28. Bartolomeo is a 22-year veteran of the VBSO and oversees all inmate-related Correctional Operations, Classification, the Criminal Intelligence Unit and the K9 Unit.
- Adding a second captain over Correctional Operations to improve oversight and leadership of the corrections teams.
- Provided additional training to all deputies in leadership positions, at the rank of sergeant and above, to improve their command-and-control skills in handling serious incidents, including use of force/response to resistance and duty to intervene.
- Seeking a consultant to review the VBSO's policies and procedures on use of force/response to resistance, use of restraints, etc., with the request for proposals closed on Jan. 9.

"From day one, I have taken this incident very seriously and have taken every possible measure to prevent it from reoccurring. What happened is not indicative of the culture of the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office nor the professionalism, compassion and skill of our deputy sheriffs," said Holcomb. "Our deputies are highly trained in use of force/response to resistance and in working with combative, mentally ill and intoxicated arrestees. This is challenging work, but we are up to the challenge, and it is our duty to ensure the health, safety and security of every person who comes through our doors. I have met personally with every deputy to reinforce our training, policies and expectations and to ensure they understand the weight of the public trust we uphold. I remain committed to justice for Rolin Hill and for everyone involved in this incident, and I have faith in our criminal justice system to ensure justice is served."

## **INCIDENT BACKGROUND**

On Tuesday, June 4, at approximately 7:15 p.m., Rolin G. Hill, 34, was brought to the VBCC by Virginia Beach Police Department officers on three charges of trespassing, resisting arrest and disorderly conduct. He arrived with visible injuries and partially restrained in a mental health "wrap", limiting his arm and leg movement. The arresting officer called Virginia Beach Emergency Medical Services to provide medical care to Hill prior to entering the VBCC, but Hill refused treatment. He was denied bond by a

magistrate and booked into the VBCC at 8:20 p.m. Hill was uncooperative and combative during the arrest and booking process, including kicking and biting deputies, requiring response to resistance and for him to be continuously restrained for his safety and the safety of others. At approximately 8:45 p.m., Hill experienced a medical emergency and received first aid from deputies and jail medical staff, including receiving CPR and naloxone. He was stabilized and breathing at the time of his transport at 9:13 p.m. via ambulance to Sentara Princess Anne Hospital. Hill was released from VBSO custody on Wednesday, June 5, and remained hospitalized at that time. He later died.

Immediately after finding out about the incident, Holcomb placed five deputy sheriffs on administrative leave and requested an independent third-party investigation by the VSP. The VBSO fully cooperated with that investigation. The incident also remains under investigation by the VBSO Professional Standards Office. As a result of those investigations, Holcomb on Oct. 18 terminated the employment of those five deputy sheriffs due to failure to comply with VBSO policy. Three of those five deputies were indicted by a special grand jury on criminal charges on Jan. 3.

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