

DougCo commissioner Thomas won't face misconduct violations



Douglas County Commissioner Lora Thomas. Photo by [Douglas County](#)

 By Mike McKibbin / NewsBreak Denver / Dec. 5, 2022

[DOUGLAS COUNTY, COLO.] — Douglas County Commissioner Lora Thomas will not face misconduct charges regarding releasing a private document to a Denver TV station earlier this year.

The Arapahoe County Sheriff's Department wrapped up its nearly four-month-long investigation in November. Thomas wrote about it in her most recent weekly email newsletter.

In a [Nov. 17 memo](#) to Thomas' attorney, sheriff's Sergeant Bruce Peterson wrote he "cannot establish probable cause to believe that the crime of ... first-degree official misconduct was committed."

Peterson also noted a separate [ethics investigation](#) earlier this year regarding an anonymous letter that claimed problems within the Douglas County Sheriff's Department.

Letter investigation findings at issue

Thomas was accused by fellow commissioners Abe Laydon and George Teal of releasing information from the letter investigation to a reporter at CBS Colorado before it was made public and had committed official

misconduct.

According to Thomas, former Douglas County attorney Lance Ingalls — under directions from Laydon and Teal — [submitted a memo](#) in August that said Thomas [might be charged](#) with criminal violations. Arapahoe County investigators reviewed that memo at the request of the Douglas County department.

Peterson noted that Ingalls included a concluding paragraph: "Colorado criminal code does not specifically prohibit a waiver of privileged and confidential information by a privilege holder."

"In this case, as a member of the board of county commissioners, Lora Thomas is a privilege holder," Peterson added.

Laydon said Monday the finding was "a gross misrepresentation of the law."

"The board of county commissioners is the privilege holder, not any individual commissioner," he stated. "Lora Thomas is certainly not absolved of any misconduct."

Laydon said his statement and Thomas' criticism in her newsletter do not mean the past year of often [public accusations](#) will continue in 2023.

"Commissioner Teal and myself have moved on from all this some time ago," he added. "I asked all of us to act professionally going forward and we [adopted policies](#) that call for just that."

Laydon also said he and Teal didn't ask the sheriff's department to investigate.

"We provided them a copy of the memo because we had a duty to do so but we didn't ask for any investigation," he said.

Thomas vows to serve full term

In her newsletter, Thomas wrote, "In no way had I subjected our county to any legal liability whatsoever. The actual truth is that I have been the one subjected to a hostile working environment for the past several months."

"I hope that my fellow commissioners Laydon and Teal will stop with the nonsense, stop with the petty politics, stop saying things that aren't true," she said during a [news conference](#) last week. "I made it clear that I am not going to quit and will serve my entire term until Jan. 14, 2025. I won't 'go along just to get along with the good ol' boys' either."

Thomas also called on the news media to not just accept statements by Laydon and Teal "but to seek evidence to support their slanderous smears against me."

Later in the newsletter, Thomas added, "The three commissioners are supposed to work together equally. No one commissioner has the job of supervising or managing another."

Thomas called both investigations "bogus" and a "ridiculous waste of government resources."

She wrote in her newsletter that the first investigation cost the county \$23,000 but did not list any other dollar amounts.