

Minnesota sheriff kills himself during child sex-abuse probe

[Kristine Goodrich](#) September 27, 2017 at 7:26 p.m.

MANKATO, Minn. — A former Watonwan County sheriff killed himself hours after he was questioned about allegations he molested two girls in southern Minnesota.

The Blue Earth County sheriff's office was investigating reports that Jack Keech, 83, had sexually assaulted two juveniles he knew when Keech died by suicide Sept. 15.

Investigator Brian Martin would have recommended Keech be charged with two counts of criminal sexual conduct, he wrote in an investigative report.

A Blue Earth County child protection worker reported on Aug. 29 that a teenager had disclosed she and another girl had been abused by a friend of the family, according to the sheriff's office investigation reports. The girl said the abuse started when she was in fourth grade and the other girl in second. The abuse occurred over several years until she reported it to family members, she told the social worker. Her family didn't believe her, she said, but prevented Keech from having any further contact with the girls.



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A sheriff investigator interviewed both girls Sept. 6 and they said Keech had molested them multiple times while they were visiting his home in Madelia. One girl said Keech also asked her to touch him and made her look at pornography. The other girl said Keech once said he wished she was older and he was younger so they could get married.

The Blue Earth County investigator then attempted to transfer the case to Watonwan County, where the assaults had allegedly occurred. A Watonwan County investigator advised that Keech was a former sheriff and asked Blue Earth County to continue the investigation to avoid any conflict of interest. Keech was sheriff for eight years a number of years ago and was a deputy for 16 years, according to his obituary.

Keech was interviewed Sept. 15 and admitted he once inappropriately touched one of the girls while giving her a massage, according to the investigation report. He reportedly admitted he did it intentionally and knew it was wrong. He denied ever abusing the other girl.

Keech was found dead later that day of an apparent suicide, according to the investigation report. No further investigation is planned.