



TOWNSHIP of JEFFERSON

County of Morris

Municipal Building
1033 Weldon Road, Lake Hopatcong, NJ 07849
Tel. (973)697-1500

Office of the MAYOR

April 10, 2023

To The Township of Jefferson Residents & Community:

As many in the community may be aware, there was an issue raised recently by PBA Local 190 ("PBA"), the union representative of our police officers, regarding their discontent with the Police Administration through a social media post on April 1, and by their attendance at the Township Council meeting on April 5 that I need to address to the community.

On April 4, the Township Administrator, Council President, Chief of Police, Police Captain, PBA President, PBA Vice President, PBA Delegate, and PBA Trustee and I, as Mayor, held a lengthy meeting to discuss the grievances of the PBA. Sadly, after this meeting, a breakdown of the wording of a joint statement could not be reached to avoid bringing this matter to a public meeting on April 5.

I think it is important to note that the April 4 meeting was the first time these issues were brought directly to my attention by the PBA as the Mayor/Director of Public Safety and the Appropriate Authority for the Police Department.

As I stated publically at the April 5 Council meeting, the Township Council has no authority over these personnel matters as outlined in our Township Ordinances and our form of Government. While I do not deny anyone the right to be heard at a public meeting, this was not the proper forum for these grievances to be heard. There were many other avenues for the PBA to resolve these matters before they went public, but I was never afforded the courtesy by the PBA leadership to attempt to resolve and address these concerns in a reasonable and respectful manner.

I also have to make the community aware, and to be very clear; I still believe that after all that was said and alleged, we have a great police department and fantastic police officers. I am uniquely qualified to say so after working here for 30 years. The vast majority do an outstanding job for our community and will continue to do a great job. I genuinely feel this was all the actions of a select few of the PBA Leadership and Membership and was not a department-wide vote of no confidence. 13 of 37 active members of the department/PBA voted for no confidence. While the Chief and I are concerned about the 13 who feel they have no faith, in the Chief, Captain, and the Police Command Staff, with my support, will work hard to try and address any reasonable concerns any member of the department may have.

At the April 4th meeting, a principal issue identified was communication between the parties. It was agreed that the parties, the Chief of Police and Police Captain, as well as the PBA executive leaders, will work together to strengthen their communication going forward. There has been no mistreatment of our police officers, as alleged. We have a deep respect for all police officers of the department. We will always seek to do our absolute best to balance the needs of our great community with the needs of the Jefferson Police Department and our individual police officers.

I thank our governing body (Township Council) for its support during this matter. Additionally, I also want to thank the PBA executive leaders for their time and extensive discussion on April 4, 2023.

I would like the community to rest assured that the Jefferson Police Department is here to continue to provide the exemplary service this great Township deserves and expects and continues to receive.

God Bless our police officers, and God Bless the Township of Jefferson.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Wilsusen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Eric F. Wilsusen
Mayor/Director of Public Safety