

Dear Editor:

This letter was originally sent to Mr. Craige of the City Council of Lafayette in the hopes that he would bring these issues to the attention of the council. It has now come to our attention that he denies receiving the letter and the council it seems is going to do nothing. It would be a shame if after so many years, our Police and Fire Departments needed Union Representation to protect them from power crazy city officials and their own Chief. In the interest of public safety I would like you to print this letter so the citizens will be aware of the situation that is currently unfolding in their city.

Dear Mr. Craig

I am pretty sure you are not aware of the imploding situation you have at the police department here in town. Chief Freeman and the City manager have set about to set up and defame a number of officers in the department. The Chief has worked hard to breed mistrust and confusion in the department, going so far as to threaten people's jobs if they speak badly of either the Chief or his newly appointed unqualified Assistant Chief. Also threatening to fire them if they so much as hear someone else talking bad about the Chief or his Assistant and they do not report the naysayers.

He has recently called a GBI investigation to set up his previous Assistant when two scopes came up missing. The scopes were in the office with an evidence tag when the previous Assistant Chief left office, and keys with the Chief. The Chief called in the GBI without ever looking for the scopes in the evidence room or asking anyone especially the previous Assistant where they might be. This confused everyone including the GBI officer involved. Well as things would turn out the Chief **GAVE THEM AWAY!!!** It now becomes obvious he was trying to set up his previous Assistant as they were calling for polygraphs on everyone to find these scopes. All the while knowing he gave them away. One was found and returned and suddenly the Chief called off the investigation when it came out that he gave it away. Everyone thinks it's because the Chief has the other one and doesn't want to be forced to take the polygraph himself. Makes you wonder doesn't it. He would not check the evidence room even after the GBI agent asked him on three separate occasions to do so; maybe it was because he already knew they weren't there. Georgia has a law, it is called theft of mislaid property, seems to fit the bill with the Chief, yet the DA said they wouldn't prosecute. Curious. He also told the GBI agent assigned to investigate when referring the previous Assistant "I should have fired that motherfucker when I had the chance".

The new assistant has had to resort to threatening people with the possibility of no future advancement opportunity if they didn't accept a position in the detective squad. Going so far as to tell an officer they had to chose sides and he and the chief were tired of this officer being neutral and a barnacle on the department. PLEASE tell me what professional talks this way!!! All of the officers with any experience in the department have voluntarily gone back to road patrol to get away from the Chiefs **screaming, ranting outbursts**. He has thrown people out of his office screaming loud enough for everyone to hear because he had told them the police department would provide police escort for a military funeral and then did not. When they came in to ask what happened he threw them out. He dislikes any branch of the military and has on many occasions made disparaging remarks regarding the military and the men and women who currently serve or who have previously served. He has also shown up on the scene of a fire (for which he has absolutely no experience or training) and been ranting and raving to the point where the citizens watching were laughing at him running around and screaming like a chicken with his head cut off. (this particular fire a women died) I believe in a crisis I would expect the Chief to be the calm one, able to take control of the situation. This is not the case with the Chief you currently have. He is trying to hang on for 5 more years so he can collect the retirement of a chief. He has surrounded himself with only young inexperienced officers who are afraid of him, totally marginalizing any officer with any time on the force and experience.

I believe he and the city manager need to go as the city manager approves his gorilla antics. The Chief it should also be noted spends most of his time on his office computer playing video poker and video golf. I do believe this is theft as he is accepting city funds for work, not games. Several officers have documented his computer time and are afraid to come

forward until he tries to fire them. They are all terrified to say anything to any member of the council as they have been told they will be fired if they do. Several have also resorted to recording any conversations they have with him. All of this is just the tip of the ice-berg and doesn't even begin to address the Chief selection process and how the City Manager intentionally set it up so he could remove qualified individuals from the process so the council would only have who he wanted them to see. There were by the way several officers with much better qualifications than the yahoo he has in there now. The only reason Mr. Freeman was given the position was because even with all of the pressure the old council could not put in someone who's biggest qualification was a tiger scout leader, where the parents actually stay with the kids because they are too young to stay alone. I should also mention that Councilman Tallon lives with his girlfriend outside the district he represents and uses his parents' address which is inside the district so that he can hold a position. I believe this happened somewhere nearby recently and that individual was forced to give up their seat.

Mr. Freeman and the City Manager rule the police and fire departments with fear and intimidation and continuously breeding mistrust and confusion. Which in this economy has worked well for them. Officers have however discussed putting a pin hole camera in the Chiefs office to prove what he does and how he behaves. One officer came forward to the chief and told him how bad things were and who wanted to plant the camera. He accused this officer of lying and forced both men to take a polygraph. The one who failed he said he would fire. The officer who told took the polygraph first (and Passed) while the accused officer denies in his written statement ever planning such an event. Just prior to his turn to take the polygraph he went into the chiefs office and came clean that he actually had discussed doing this with other officers. Well then what a surprise when he passed too!! The chief has not only, not fired this officer, but he has not disciplined this officer in any way. Amazing Stuff! He is totally irrational especially when he is in a situation he is not qualified to handle. So he just screams and rants until everyone says or does what he wants.

It is sad that what once, was a very proud community and department has been reduced to the laughing stock of not only North Georgia but Tennessee as well. If you look at candidates for new openings there are no officers with any experience trying to go there anymore. It is only young people who still need to attend the academy and who he can control because they simply don't know any better and need experience before they can move to the more progressive departments. This department used to be fairly progressive, the city manager and the chief have been removing those advancements one at a time, at some point he will be the dictator over the department with only his golf buddy to supervise him. Oh you should also check on the chief and city manager going to the clubhouse and drinking while driving city vehicles. I first believed this was only the chief, then it was brought to my attention it was in fact the chief and the city manager.

I hope this is information you were not already aware of and you found it somewhat helpful.

I would dearly love to sign this letter, however people will get fired if anyone finds out who wrote this. So I will have to suffice with.

A Very Concerned Citizen

Well obviously the letter has made the Chief and City Manager very angry. Although the point of the letter was to let you know as council people what is going on that they are keeping from you. He has tried to get the GBI involved to investigate who wrote this letter (they declined) probably after they stopped laughing. He is now making the men and women on the force take a writing test to see if he can figure out whose handwriting may be on the letter. Maybe I'm a fireman, I never said I was a cop, maybe I'm just a damn citizen that has had enough of the corruption. I could just be someone with some integrity. I should also ask if the council is aware that Eric lives outside the district he represents (with his girlfriend) and only uses his mom and dad's address so he appears to live in district. I think this recently happened somewhere else and that council person was forced to resign???? I'm sure it was all over the news. After Sam Parker and that fiasco news coverage is just what we need. We have all found it quite funny that the chief is so much more interested in creating drama than actually running a police department- at least he has found something he is good at. Just so you know, no one knows who wrote this and they won't, just so they don't get in trouble. I also find it funny, how when his own policy doesn't suit him and he violates it, and then says he'll just change it. Is there a point to this policy???

I am really hoping that council collectively sees at least some of the issues. Some of your wives and family hate the city manager and chief as much as the police and fire departments. Do our officers really have to tolerate being called a barnacle by anyone, let alone an unqualified Assistant Chief?? By someone whose claim to fame is he sucks up to the chief. He was let go from the SRO position because they thought he was lazy!!!!!! His only promotions in all his years on the department were after this chief came, Dino realized his incompetence and wanted to fire him and was talked out of it several times.

If this witch hunt is allowed to continue it will be sad. I hope the council takes this to heart and looks into the situation they have. I would very much like to see this resolved in a professional manner. However, if the council can't handle it, it will be on every broadcast network and print media that I can find. Maybe I will send it in a mass mailing to every home in Lafayette so the people know what is going on. If nothing else it will take some of the attention from the current oil spill. Please let the chief know there is nothing criminal or illegal about someone giving facts to the public to make informed decisions. (I really don't think the GBI cares if people like the chief) I whole heartedly support my constitution and all of its amendments. Then if they vote at least they will be making informed decisions and not just based on BS. I understand this is not a pleasant position to be put in, and I am sorry. I wish that open communication with the council was not forbidden, you would hear much more than what I have to say I'm sure. With the exception of a few officers the department is miserable. No one wants to come to work and they are afraid everyday of being fired in one of his tirades. Some are even so stressed out they are physically sick over this. Would you want to work in this environment, for this kind of terrorist? Hell this chief even thinks it's acceptable to borrow money from his men, and I mean thousands of dollars not just a 20 for lunch. Are you aware he had to take anger management classes in Griffin and they threw a party AFTER he left they were so excited. That is certainly not because he was a good manager or leader, and not because he instilled loyalty among his men. Very sad wouldn't you say. I was hoping you would address these and the other issues with the council not just turn it over to the city manager and the chief. I know everyone is disappointed. I will wait for now to see what happens and if the council address these issues.