

Dear Chief Jones,

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You have asked department members "Why is the officer moral at The Gainesville Police Department just so bad"? First, officers pay is one of the two major issues plaguing this agency. The second is your lack of leadership and obvious disregard for the officers who serve under you.

For the past several years you have systematically taken step after step to completely demoralize your entire rank and file, and have made this agency everything other than a police department. You have taken this agency, which was once a premiere agency, to an agency everyone is looking to leave. Look around, a significant number of officers and sergeants are actively looking for jobs, and have voiced they can't leave fast enough. We are falling in line with the Dallas Police Department's recent mass exodus of officers for the same reasons. You have made it very obvious that officers who work here are easily replaceable. However, you won't hire new ones. Officers are over worked, under paid, and fatigued due to your significant lack of leadership. Your actions speak volumes that by re-organizing and creating new civilian positions, versus utilizing those same funds for pay raises or training, is far more important. You only have one agenda at this department, and it's strictly political.

Case in point. During a supervisors meeting you were asked point blank why you chose to create 5 new positions for almost 450k vs using those same funds to give your officers pay raises. You refused to answer that question and stated it was your choice and became very angry and felt you were "being attacked". You are coming under attack from the critically under staffed patrol officers who serve under you. Patrol has lost all respect for you due to your actions or lack there of rather.

The consensus throughout the department is you are single handily responsible for the worst moral crisis in the agencies history. Just like everything else you do, you will ignore the problem, but the God's honest truth is you are the problem not the solution. You have made your position very clear, through your actions - you support criminals who break the law and complain on officers. Your main priorities are the Reichert House, re-organization of the department, and creating new civilian positions costing the department \$420K.

Are you more concerned about losing your job than advocating for your officers? That was rhetorical. The only thing officers have consistently seen you advocate for is the Reichert House. Nobody at the Department likes the Reichert House and how you continuously dump money into that program. You have aggressively advocated for significant pay raises and new positions for them, however, when it comes to pay raises for your officers....we don't hear you advocating for us. People are fleeing this sinking ship due to your leadership. Change starts at the top and we have no faith in it.

Here are a few more examples of how you are systematically destroying the Gainesville Police Department.

You come to work every single day violating the departments uniform policy by only wearing your service weapon, but you expect everyone else to follow the policy. If the head of the department is not following his own policy, why should we? When looking at news conference after news conference across the nation, from Police Chief to Sheriff, they all wear their entire uniform. They wear it because they are proud to wear it. Par for the course, after reading this you will be amending the current policy so you'll be exempt from having to wear the FULL uniform. If you want officers to respect you, wear the uniform per the department policy which you signed!

Your actions have shown us you are more concerned about playing politics then advocating for your officers. You have taken NO stance when it comes to getting a step plan or any pay raises for your officers in the last 7 years. You do, however, aggressively advocated for those new civilian positions and the department reorganization, but nothing for your officers. As the Chief of Police you should be advocating to the city management and commission that YOUR officers deserve raises. Instead you decided to add new positions - two Majors, XO's, grant writers, Assistant District Chief, the Reichert House and so on...etc. Your actions clearly demonstrate that you just don't care about your rank and file. Officers have no desire to work for you, since you have no desire to work for them.

Officers do not feel any support from their chain of command when being pro-active. Officers feel while enforcing high crime areas and then get complaints, that they will not be supported. You and your command staff have clearly stated you do not support targeting high crime areas. Officers are afraid they will be put on a department "black list" and then be in a hostile work environment, which the department's command has clearly demonstrated it does. Supervisors are advising officers to not do anything and only answer calls for service. Why do you think officers are not being pro active and crime is going way up! Compare the number of arrests from last year to this year - that should be a clue. Violent crime has significantly risen in the last year, why do you think that is? When you start respecting and advocating for your officers that work for you and not the citizens, maybe we will respect you.

Here is a another example of how you handle incidents with known drug dealers who fight the police. After the recent use of force incident in Phoenix, you immediately have a Monday morning quarterback session with your command staff critiquing the entire incident. What message does that send your officers, not a good one. Since, when do you hold command staff panel reviews of these incidents? Then you scrutinize the patrol officers actions who were doing their job! This "upstanding" citizen in the community was observed selling narcotics all day (by a sergeant) out of his car in Phoenix. When those officers made contact with this individual, he was caught with a significant amount of drugs in his possession. When those officers go to detain him, he immediately resists and officers were required to use force. (These two officers are some of the best officers working the road). This individual continues to actively resist and then flees on foot, whereby officers deploy a taser (per department policy) and he falls and lands on his face. If he did not fight and subsequently run, he probably would not have sustained any injuries. His injuries are the direct result of his own actions of him resisting.

Under your outstanding leadership, you are now holding an ice cream social with these residents and are refusing to have any patrol officers attend. Why! What are you hiding? This behavior is a clear message that you do not back your officers at all. You are more concerned with your public opinion numbers, and the community, then the officers who work for you. An "Ice cream social" is your best solution! Your stance and statement to the residents of Phoenix should be this and only this - if you chose to sell drugs and resist MY police officers, we will use the force necessary to place you into handcuffs. If you fight officers you could be injured and may be TASERED. If you want to commit crimes in my city then we will take you to jail. Your solution was an ice cream social with only you present. If that does not send the clearest message to the entire department about how you do not value your officers, I don't know what else does.

Officers are now so afraid of being punished and that you are actively looking to target them that they are now second guessing their actions on the road because they are too afraid they will be in "trouble". This is a huge officer safety issue and very concerning. Also, officers feel they do not stand a chance with the current Internal Affairs Lieutenant, which is very alarming.

Our officer involved shooting. Not once did you come out and publicly support your officers. It was all double speak and political rhetoric. You should have held a press conference and stated you fully support your officers and their use of force. Until it is determined otherwise by FDLE of any wrong doing you should have backed them but to you that is career suicide. The Sheriff put out three letters supporting her deputies. You had someone else make a press release - Way to lead your department. After that incident you never came to any briefings and expressed that you supported the officers involved in the shooting. Nothing. You had an opportunity to come to every briefing and show your support, but no surprise there. You have sent a clear message to everyone that during a critical incident you do not care about your officers and are more concerned about your politics and public perception. Maybe this is not the job for you anymore?

Promotions - Individuals that were promoted within the last two years have set the department back years! The Major even stated himself in a meeting how the last round of promotions were a disaster and a joke. Officers that were promoted have cost the department thousands of dollars in settlements by creating hostile work environments. That same person who created a hostile work environment, is now the internal affairs Lieutenant. The people who have been promoted are ineffective and do not know how to do their job. Instead of promoting officers who ranked the highest on the promotion list, you picked from the bottom.

Here is yet another example of your "leadership". Police officers who have failed out of the field training program are then subsequently placed into the Reichert House. These same Officers who failed the field training program are subsequently given "new positions" and pay raises? Employees who failed went from a base salary of 45k to over 65k.

Sheriff Grady Judd and Sheriff David Clark are leaders and who you should try to emulate. These are how true leaders lead. You sir are a politician, serving your own agenda and creating positions within the department which there does not need to be. It would be better to have 5 more officers on the road and you advocating pay raises for your officers. This is just another example of how you fail to lead this department and how you just recently solidified the vast majority of officers distain for you. Good police officers are fleeing this department based single handily on your horrible "leadership" and management. Sargent's who have been here 14 years plus years are actively looking for employment elsewhere! How do you not see you are at the main problem for this department? Officers come to work and don't want to work, they sit around all night, and violent crime is going up, and frankly we don't care.

The new Major will soon fall in line with your agenda and will just be another puppet on your strings. Command staff is unwilling to take a firm stance and go against you and soon so will the Major. Advice to the new Major....Tampa Police Department is hiring.

The Gainesville Police Department is a sinking ship and is sinking fast. Unless the Chief resigns the problem will not get any better. I hope you actually listen to what your patrol is saying. Unfortunately I do not see you or the command staff taking this seriously.

To give what I am saying more validity, Sgt. Courtney Roberts posted this on Facebook and advised to send to all citizens. If this is not evidence enough that leadership is "TOXIC" and a part of the problem then we don't know how else to tell you.

Per Sgt. Courtney Roberts, GPD:

**"LISTEN CAREFULLY GAINESVILLE! (This is long but I implore you to read) This is what it looks like for those of us who run TOWARDS gunfire...instead of away from it. This was only 85 miles away...and if you think we don't have terrorists like this in Gainesville you're in EXTREME DENIAL! Think about Gator game days...think about the safety of your family and loved ones. Now here is the EXTREMELY IMPORTANT PART for you as concerned citizens so PAY ATTENTION!**

Every day in Gainesville there are less and less heroes willing or able to do this for you. The Gainesville Police Department is leaking like a sieve. Good Officers are literally FLEEING this agency. Between ZERO pay increase in over 5 years...and the TOXIC "leadership" that has allowed this to happen...nearly everyone who can, is seeking opportunities outside of the Gainesville Police Department.

Both the City and our department squander money on non-essential projects or interests while absolutely taking for granted the men and women who are willing TO DIE for YOU AND YOUR FAMILY. The City and GPD management has become accustomed to treating the officers like crap...and knowing that we will still show up and put our lives on the line and provide outstanding service to our citizens.

Well...the saturation point has been more than reached. Officers are leaving GPD DAILY. I...COURTNAY ROBERTS...whose father literally built this place...and whose name is on the building...a supervisor with 14 years invested...and more training and experience than I could list here (all to benefit the people I serve)...am actively pursuing opportunities anywhere BUT the Gainesville Police Department. Our City Commission CLEARLY doesn't care...our GPD Management CLEARLY doesn't care...but it's time for the citizens that we serve to care...and be vocal about it.

We make LESS money than we did 6 years ago. We have had ZERO increase in pay...yet our insurance premiums have increased every year...GRU has obviously increased...groceries have increased...rent has increased...everything has gone up. We are consistently asked to do more...but with zero compensation for it...we are ill-equipped...and now you are being protected with DANGEROUSLY low levels of staffing. It exponentially increases the danger to my officers...and exponentially increases the danger to YOU.

We need you to get involved. We need you to stand with FOP Gator Lodge 67 and contact every member of the City Commission and demand that they take care of the people who take care of you and your family. This is a crisis that has gone on too long. We need help.”

His sentiment is echoed by the majority of Gainesville Police Officers. This is a systemic issues plaguing the Gainesville Police Department not a few disgruntled officers. Our pay is a significant issue officers are facing and the City of Gainesville Management has taken a stance of historically not giving raises to us. We have not received a raise in 7 years and they have actively made sure we have not. The City of Gainesville is flush with money for all kinds of unneeded projects but when it comes to protecting the city they do not have any. But beyond pay Chief Jones is also a significant problem which also cannot be left alone. All Officers at the Gainesville Police Department stand united and strong about getting fair pay for the job we do. It is clear where we stand - change of leadership and pay.

CC:

Gainesville City Management

City of Gainesville Mayor

Gainesville Sun

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