

Mayor Tim Mahoney and Fargo City Commissioners,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and former Police Officer with the City of Fargo. I recently resigned from my position as a Fargo Police Officer due to concerns that I along with others have experienced since Chief Zibolski and his new administration took control. These concerns have caused mental health issues as well as low morale.

As a person growing up and raising my family in Fargo and then serving under former Chief Todd, I have seen morale continue to decline these past few months. This has caused not only me but others to resign and move on to either other departments or other careers with lower pay. Yes, what is going on in the country placing policing in general under a microscope has increased resignations however at the Fargo Police Department it has to do mostly with the culture and lack of communication of this current administration.

Lack of communication between the administration and officers seems to be a common complaint among those who have resigned. There have been times where officers have brought concerns of low morale to supervisors. During meetings with Chief Zibolski he seemed shocked and would comment that it was the first he was hearing of the issue. Either he is lying and not concerned, or his administration is not communicating these concerns with him. Some who served under Chief Ternes are comparing his administration to this administration in a negative way. We all know how that turned out. Some have said the ship is sinking and this administration is doing nothing to fix it.

I also believe that the implementation of the 10-hour schedule has really put a strain on the department. Officers are getting over worked and some days not even getting to take breaks. When asked about staffing supervisors respond, it's going to get worse before it gets better. Officers have even brought up ideas of how to temporarily fix some staffing issues which the Chief has shot down. Officers are also being told to let calls hold and that citizens can wait. This causes public frustration among citizens who expect and deserve better service.

Finally, the department held a Sergeant promotional exam. Many officers are concerned over the lack of patrol experience those selected have compared to those who were not selected. Experience matters and patrol officers are concerned about new Sergeants being able to make decisions that affect the safety of the officers and public. This was addressed during the Chief's monthly meeting and his response was some have been mentored better and even referred to one officer as "his number 2".

With these concerns I feel for the safety and moral welfare of the people of the Fargo Police Department something needs to change. I think officers are more willing to speak up about morale and other concerns through a survey. With a survey I feel Officers will feel like their voices are being heard because with this administration they do not feel that is happening.

Thank you very much for your time and attention to this matter.

Received 12-3-21  
JM

City of Fargo Director of Human Resources Jill Minette,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and former Police Officer with the City of Fargo. I recently resigned from my position as a Fargo Police Officer due to concerns that I along with others have experienced since Chief Zibolski and his new administration took control. These concerns have caused mental health issues as well as low morale.

I resigned a few months ago as I could see a continuous drop in both mental health along with morale among many of my co-workers. I too was not only having issues at work but due to it affecting my family life and not seeing an end in sight I resigned.

The one thing I noticed prior to my departure is the continuous deflection that not only Chief Zibolski engaged in but also his newly appointed Assistant Chief along with many high-ranking officers. They continuously deflected the morale problem as "its only officers that don't like change" or "its those officers that feel like they deserve promotions that are leaving." I can tell you if they sat down with officers just for 30 minutes, they would come to find out that we were not against change we were just against the way change was being implemented and the lack of communication among administration and officers.

I can tell you that I served under Chief Ternes and the resemblance of this administration and his is remarkably similar. We all know how that turned out and if things don't get addressed from an HR and City Commission point with this administration we will end up in the same exact situation.

I can also tell you that we as the department were excited for a new fresh mind to come in and lead however Chief Zibolski and his appointed administration are the main reason behind so many departures. If you add up all the departures over the last year some are choosing different careers and some are sticking with law enforcement however almost all have one thing in common and that is they are leaving for jobs with lower pay. If things are bad enough for people to leave and accept lower wages than this crap that Chief Zibolski says is because of what is happening with law enforcement across the country is completely and utterly false. He needs to open his eyes and ears and deal with his mistakes and poor leadership before this city has no one willing to protect it.

I am hoping that this letter will help both HR and City Commissioners better understand why officers are so determined to leave the police department that they spend time on their days off looking for other jobs. Officers feel that their voices are not heard from this administration and even if someone speaks up why they fear retaliation among the administration and their poor leadership.

So, for the citizens of Fargo and those officers that have put their lives on hold so many times for this city we would all appreciate your attention to this matter. My brothers and sisters who still wear blue want to see change not just for their mental health and morale but to better and make the police department the best in the country.