



PAWTUCKET POLICE DEPARTMENT



DONALD R. GREBIEN
MAYOR

TINA GONCALVES
CHIEF OF POLICE

May 30, 2024

Council President Terrence Mercer
Pawtucket City Hall
137 Roosevelt Avenue
Pawtucket, RI 02680

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RE: Response to Councilor Gregor's Comments regarding the Pawtucket Police Department

Dear Honorable Council,

I am writing to you on behalf of the men and women of the Pawtucket Police Department. After attending the May 8, 2024 Council meeting and hearing Councilor Gregor once again make disparaging comments about the Pawtucket Police Department with no factual basis, I felt compelled to provide an accurate account of the arrest he referred to and to defend the hard-working men and women of the Pawtucket Police Department against this politically motivated false narrative.

Police departments across the country have been met with challenging times recently greatly effecting community relationships, recruitment and retention. The Pawtucket Police Department is committed to changing the negative public perception surrounding policing and understand this will take a great deal of time and effort. However, this becomes increasingly challenging when elected officials make false and misleading statements to the public.

The arrest Councilor Gregor referenced occurred on May 2, 2024. On that day, police were dispatched to 214 Roosevelt Ave, Fogarty Manor, for a male tenant who was out of control and management was requesting his removal. Upon the arrival of police, the officer was informed that the male tenant was causing a disturbance by screaming at the elderly females and calling them derogatory names. The officer on scene repeatedly requested that the male tenant leave the area, to which he refused. After repeated requests the male was informed that he was being placed under arrest for disorderly conduct.

The male lunged at the officer and proceeded to wrap both arms around the officer's waist in a bear hug style movement. As the officer tried to gain compliance of the male he realized the male had his hand on the officer's weapon and he quickly brought the male to the ground. After a brief struggle, the officer was able to effectuate the arrest. It should be noted that after the male was in custody the officer realized the safety mechanism on his firearm had been deactivated by the male suspect. The incident was captured both on internal security footage and body camera footage.

Shortly after the arrest, Councilor Gregor and Representative Cruz responded to police headquarters and requested to speak with a supervisor. A supervisor met with them in the lobby area where they requested information about the arrest. They were informed that the male was in custody, safe, and the Sergeant could not comment on an ongoing investigation or provide any further details. Councilor Gregor expressed concern about the incident due to it involving an "84 year old black man". Councilor Gregor and Representative Cruz proceeded to request to speak with the male in custody. Their request was denied. Before leaving, they provided business cards, indicating who they were and their elected political positions.

It is my belief that Councilor Gregor and Representative Cruz attempted to use their elected positions to gain favor in the police department. Once they were met with negative results they proceeded to paint a public narrative that was unfavorable to the police department. In light of the hard work the Pawtucket Police Department has done and will continue to do to strengthen ties with our community, this politically motivated attack on the police department is unacceptable. Councilor Gregor and Representative Cruz have sworn an oath to the City of Pawtucket and the State of Rhode Island and as such have an ethical obligation to be truthful and unbiased in their representations.

The men and women of the Pawtucket Police Department are trained professionals, who have taken an oath to protect and serve the residents of the City of Pawtucket and deserve to be recognized for their efforts. Please accept this memo as a reminder of the dangerous and difficult tasks that not only the men and women of the Pawtucket Police Department face on a daily basis, but every law enforcement officer across the country.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,



Chief Tina Goncalves

TG

C: Mayor Donald R. Grebien
Richard Goldstein, MMC

Cc: Fraternal Order of Police President Cioe
Representative Cherie Cruz
Councilor Clovis Gregor