

Chief Kelly Stillman  
Beachwood Police Department  
2700 Richmond Road  
Beachwood, Ohio 44122

September 28, 2020

Dear Chief Stillman:

I was recently asked to serve Beachwood as a Special Prosecutor in determining charges and prosecuting Councilman Michael Burkons. That matter was just filed last week and is currently pending before the Shaker Heights Municipal Court.

As you have only just been sworn in to this new position, I imagine that you have a ton of items to tackle all at once. I am quite sorry to add to that circumstance. However, I feel a responsibility to bring something to your attention.

In my role as a Special Prosecutor, I was called upon to review a City Council Resolution No. 2020-3, dated August 18, 2020. Because the document includes multiple attached exhibits, it is impractical to print and send with this letter, so I ask you to refer to it. If you do not have easy access to it, please let me know and I can email a PDF of the document to you.

One of the exhibits attached to the Resolution caused me to have very serious concerns regarding the conduct of one of your officers – Lt. Owens. The exhibit shows that Lt. Owens was engaging in a long personal conversation via text message with Councilman Burkons about multiple topics. As a resident of Beachwood, that is not in itself problematic, of course. However, there is a portion of the conversation that I found deeply troubling.

In July, a citizen named Alix Nouredine emailed members of City Council asking for follow up about a complaint he had made about Lt. Owens some years ago. Councilman Burkons took issue with Mr. Nouredine's complaint and retaliated by sending an email to Mr. Nouredine's employer. I am currently prosecuting Councilman Burkons for Interference with Civil Rights for doing that.

On the exact same date that the Councilman sent his retaliatory email, there are text messages from Lt. Owens to Councilman Burkons in which Lt's Owens thanks him for doing this illegal thing for him. In reviewing this body of evidence for possible criminal charges, I seriously considered whether there might also be probable cause to charge Lt. Owens with Conspiracy. Ultimately, I decided that the evidence I had in front of me was not enough to show that Lt. Owens asked the Councilman to take that action on his behalf or that he even knew it was happening ahead of time. The evidence I have access to only proves that he was thanking him afterwards. As such, no criminal charges will be filed against Lt. Owens as it relates to this matter, assuming no additional information will to be presented to me.

The Lt.'s conversation with the Councilman shows quite a lot to be desired by both men in terms of professionalism, as they engaged in mocking other members of council and criticizing the law enforcement agencies in neighboring jurisdictions. But I was shocked when I saw Lt. Owens' texts thanking a public official for purposefully trying to intimidate another citizen for making a complaint against him.

Lt. Owens' conduct was unprofessional and unethical. I am not familiar with Beachwood's policies and procedures for your Police Department, so I leave it to you to conclude how it might apply to this situation. Now that these texts have become a part of public record, I would not be surprised if the citizens of Beachwood unfairly question the integrity of other public servants who do not deserve the criticism.

I appreciate your time in considering this information.

Yours very truly,



Stephanie B. Scalise,  
Special Prosecutor for City of Beachwood

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