

The Town of Barrackville is committed to keeping our community informed and maintaining full transparency regarding recent events. On July 1, 2026, Barrackville Police Chief, Zachary Freeburn met with Council Member Alex Neville and informed him that the evidence locker had been cleaned out pursuant to an order from the Marion County Prosecutor's Office and the only items remaining were firearms which were confiscated years ago and approximately \$30.00 of cash which was abandoned. On July 2, 2026, Chief Freeburn tendered his resignation via post to the Barrackville Police Department Facebook Page. Officer David Hunt then reached out to Mayor Straight requesting a meeting regarding an action plan for the Barrackville Police Department. Based upon the lack of proper records and other documentation, the Mayor, pursuant to his authority, determined that the best course of action was to place Officers Hunt and Ethan Darden on a temporary inactive status to give the new Council time to review all pertinent information regarding the operation of the Barrackville Police Department.

On July 6, 2026, subsequent to Chief Freeburn's resignation, Mayor Straight expressed concerns regarding unauthorized persons having access to surveillance cameras remotely. The camera recording equipment was located inside the evidence vault and unplugged to address the Mayor's concerns. Council Members Alex Neville, Ed Brown, and Mark Shaver, under the direction of Mayor Straight, who was also present, attempted to locate all firearms, badges, and other sensitive accountable property owned by the town. All council members entered the evidence vault, which also contained a safe, to search for the property. The Mayor and Council Members located a list of combinations on a desk in the department and utilized one of the combinations to examine the contents of the safe, which yielded negative results. Mayor Straight then located keys for the police vehicles and requested that Council Member Neville secure any property. At that time, it was discovered that one of the vehicles was unlocked and the other contained a rifle, which was not properly secured in order to prevent theft. Council Member Brown removed the firearm and Council Member Neville secured both vehicles. Mayor Straight then requested that Council Member Neville maintain possession of the keys.

On July 7, 2026, Officers Hunt and Darden met with Mayor Straight and Council Member Neville at the town hall. Mayor Straight informed the officers that they would be placed on temporary inactive status and requested that they turn over all town property in their possession while the Mayor and Council reviewed the policies, practices and procedures of the police department.

After hearing that he would be placed on temporary inactive status, Officer Hunt responded by indicating that he is going to investigate the breaking and entering of the police department's evidence room and would now be claiming "whistleblower" status. Officer Hunt then called the Fairmont Detachment of the West Virginia State Police to come to town hall and investigate. After meeting with Officer Hunt, the West Virginia State Trooper then met with Mayor Straight and Council Member Neville, at which time, both the Mayor and Council Member informed the Trooper that the town will fully cooperate with any investigation. Shortly after this meeting, the Mayor was informed that the Police Clerk is resigning from the position.

The assertion that the entire police staff has been fired is entirely inaccurate. The Mayor and Council engaged in necessary acts of oversight to ensure the accountability of the

Barrackville Police Department and confirm that the Department was complying with all rules and regulations under which the department should have been operating. The Town of Barrackville is committed to transparency, accountability and the safety of its residents.