

AFSCME AFL-CIO LOCAL 2841

P.O. BOX 6567, ALBANY, NEW YORK 12206



April 19, 2021

Honorable Mayor Kathy Sheehan
City of Albany
Rm 107
24 Eagle St. Albany, NY 12207

Chief Eric Hawkins
Chief of Police Albany Police Department
165 Henry Johnson Blvd. Albany, NY 12210

Dear Mayor Sheehan and Chief Hawkins:

On behalf of the Albany Police Officers Union, I am formally writing to notify both of you that then men and women of the department are being sent into harm's way and are being placed in danger outside the normal dangers we currently face in law enforcement due to failures from City Hall and Command Staff. You are knowingly jeopardizing the health, and safety of each member of this department. Under your leadership there has been a lack of training, preparedness, appropriate safety protocols, and failed policies. You are increasing the likelihood that one of the men and women working here could be seriously injured or God forbid killed.

The events currently unfolding at South Station have shown every member of this department that in your eyes we are expendable. As our leaders you have failed each of us. It is noticeably clear and evident to the members of this bargaining unit that as a department we did not learn anything from the riots that unfolded last year in the wake of the George Floyd murder. In what should have been a learning and teaching moment this department did nothing. That is also abundantly clear for the members of this union who have been told now for nearly 3 years that one of the goals was to improve the safety and security of each of our buildings. To date, none of the improvements that have been promised were fulfilled. Many of these have been documented and discussed in depth at labor management meetings.

The men and women of the department who have given so much of their lives to this City and scarified so much, including time with their own families, have become completely demoralized and ashamed to come to work. In a time when morale is at an all-time low, they are looking for a leader and support. None of which seems to be coming. These men and women watched as an occupying force drove vehicles on sidewalks without regard for pedestrian safety, set up an encampment outside the station, hanging signs, banners, and stickers on a building these officers essentially call home away from home. The officers had to barricade themselves inside and handcuff the doors as the only way of securing the door. They had to watch as the group placed numerous back packs around the outside of the station wondering "could one of those bags hold an improvised explosive device". Then they watched as the occupying force started fires in the street, wondering "is tonight the night this occupying force burns us out of our station".

I implore both of you, look each one of these officers and dispatchers in the face and answer the questions I receive on almost a daily basis. "Does this place honestly even care about us? "What are they going to do when one of us gets hurt or killed?" Under your leadership as Mayor and Chief of Police you have seen one of the largest mass exodus of law enforcement officers from this department. Is it a wonder anymore why this job has become less than desirable to the men and women currently working here?

I will be notifying each of my members of this letter and ensuring them that if something happens to them, they should seek civil action against the department and City for a failure to act and a failure to protect them. It is our hope that you seriously take into consideration this letter and the concerns of the men and women of this department so as that neither of you ever must look an officer or their family in the eyes and know you failed them.

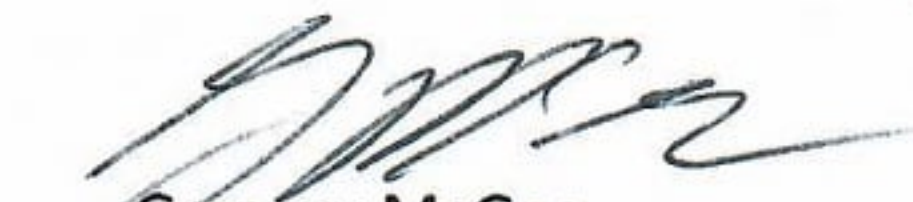
Respectfully,


Gregory McGee
President Albany Police Officers Union

The members of the Common Council, on a regular basis express their public support for unions, union workers rights, the collective bargaining process, and Taylor Law, they do so only when it benefits their own agenda. The members of the Common Council have shown support for other unionized workers in the city and unionized workers in the private sector but have not shown that same support to the unionized workers in the police department (including Non-Sworn and Communications). When it comes to supporting the police officers and the police union in its own City, they sit and remain silent. They have watched for years as our working conditions deteriorate, our stations crumble around us, and we go years and years without a contract and raise. They have witnessed us become a less than desirable place of employment, and they are now witnessing the mass exodus of police officers to retirement and transfers. The motto "do more with less" has never fit so well than it does to the Albany Police Department. The leaders of the City of Albany and the members of the Common Council claim that they are "pro union and Albany is union town" just not their police union.

I am deeply concerned for the lasting effects this continued anti- police attitude is going to have on this police department and the services they provide to the residents of this city. I implore every resident to get out and voice your concerns to your elected officials over the complete mismanagement that is taking place and do so before it is too late. Because the next time you call 911 it is our fear your call could be answered by another jurisdiction and the cop you requested takes more than 3 hours to respond.

Respectfully,



Gregory McGee
President APOU