

Members of the Scappoose City Council:

Greetings,

Almost exactly 1 year ago I became employed with the Scappoose Police Department as a lieutenant.

I joined with the intention of growing a progressive police culture in a small agency that already enjoyed strong public support and a solid relationship with the council. The reality of how this wouldn't be possible came to light in about 8 weeks of my employment. At that point I began looking to leave as I believed my goals of creating a stable, collaborative and community focused department wouldn't be possible due to the following factors:

- A history of issues and small problems that festered and were never dealt with over years by past city hall management.
- A culture of fear and isolation.
- No tolerance for inter-agency collaboration.
- Zero acceptance of new ideas or procedures.
- A dissatisfied work force.
- Micromanagement.
- Distrust of police admin and city administration.
- A focus on less important tasks and aversion to the bigger issues.

It would be inaccurate to blame one person for this dysfunction, but rather a culture created in past city administrations and police leadership and the sheltering of these behaviors by the inter-reliability of senior employees at the city.

The bottom line is this, I left because under the current leadership I would never be able to grow a stable department and that saddens me because I truly care about the people serving at SPD. I also left because without wholesale change in the way the city does business, we will continue to see a complete change of personnel in the police department every year.

My fear is that the department will not be viable in the next months with the planned exodus of officers and the department could be operating at 3 or 4 officers yet again.

How things can be fixed:

- Interview all police employees or conduct an anonymous survey so that they can express their true feelings without fear.
- Talk to police union leadership.
- Task an outside person to assess the department - Do not involve the current City Manager or H/R Director as they have personal interest for the status quo.
- Start over with a real strategic plan and timelines for the department to stabilize.
- If needed, consider contracting police services to the county or St. Helens and allow them to manage it.

I appreciate your time and attention to all this. I am thankful for the relationships and people I have befriended here, and I look forward to assisting the city in any way I can.

Sincerely,

Michael Rouches