



International Brotherhood of Police Officers

A DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

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Police Unions Respond to Elected Official's Comment at Select Board Meeting

Joint statement from the Reading Police Supervisors Union and
the Reading Police Patrol Officers Union.

READING, MA - During a recent meeting of the Reading Select Board, comments made by an elected official called into question the integrity of the Reading Police force. The Reading Police Supervisors Union and the Reading Police Patrol Officers Union would like to address the incident.

On February 11, 2020, members of the Reading Police Department attended a scheduled Reading Select Board meeting to hear information on an agenda item; "Police Chief Hiring Process Update." The majority of these officers attended the meeting in civilian attire. During the meeting, members of the department, who are also town residents, respectfully addressed the Board with their concerns over further delays in appointing a chief and any negative impacts there could be on the department and community.

As the meeting progressed, a member of the Board chose to voice his concern about feeling "intimidated" by the presence of such a large number of police officers and the access they have to guns. While the officers would never invalidate the feelings that might prompt a comment such as this one, it came without any provocation. The officers in attendance displayed only respect for the Board, as they have a vested interest in the outcome of the proceedings.

It is a great disappointment that the Board member's statement has left us with the need to respond publicly. However, the comments that were directed at the women and men of the Reading Police Department by an elected official are shameful. To insult and fault us for carrying firearms in the performance of our dangerous line of work, is beyond hurtful and detrimental to the reputation of all the officers. We serve this community with pride and risk our lives for the safety of its citizens. Such a statement by an elected official undermines the communities trust in the Police, and trust is the very foundation on which a successful Police Department is built.

We are writing this statement to assure the community that they will continue to receive the same exemplary service from the Reading Police department that they are accustomed to. Many of the men and women of the RPD became police officers because of an overwhelming sense of community and caring for others. These values will never change, no matter what is said about them in any venue. We will not accept the divisive label of being "intimidating," but instead we will continue our efforts to engage the public in a positive manner.

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