

Mr. Mayor, Members of the Council, and citizens of Quartzsite,

Members of the Quartzsite Police Officers Association, representing approximately 80% of the department, met with AZPOST to make a formal complaint against Police Chief Jeff Gilbert. These officers provided a detailed letter, outlining years of management abuses, misconduct, EEO violations, and political and criminal behavior against Chief Gilbert. The Quartzsite Police Officers Association notified AZCOPS, who have also requested of AZPOST an immediate investigation of Chief Gilbert.

Some of the allegations against Chief Gilbert:

- ▲ “White-out” the town manager's signature on their leave requests forms, giving the appearance the town manager had not previously approved the initial request.
- ▲ Violating medical privacy acts under federal law
- ▲ Uses his authority as the Chief to intimidate both officers and members of the community if they disagree with his methodology and political affiliation
- ▲ Chief Gilbert uses, or orders members of the Department to use NCIC to find “dirt” on political candidates or citizens supporting candidates the Chief dislikes
- ▲ “Friends” of the Chief who have warrants for their arrests are not placed in custody
- ▲ Officers are ordered to make traffic stops and arrest/cite citizens who the Chief believes are against him
- ▲ Disciplines members of the Department on how “loyal” they are to him; not on the merit of the investigation
- ▲ Ridicules and humiliates members of the Department he deems are “unfit” in front of others
- ▲ Promotes those who are loyal/friends of his in violation of Department/HR rules and policies

In the past few weeks, members of the Quartzsite Police Officers Assoc. made it known to members of the Town Council and other agencies our concerns involving the conduct of Chief Gilbert.

We advised the Town Council not only of policy violations, but criminal violations against citizens as well. We notified the Town Council that we have a vote of “No Confidence” in his leadership.

In the interest of town unity, we did our duty, and reported our concerns to the Town leaders, with offers of supporting evidence, in an effort to allow them to take this matter into their own hands and away from ours.

We have realized that the Town Manager, Alex Taft, continually attempted to delay, stall or prevent this investigation from taking place. Alex Taft and Chief Gilbert approached his own known associates at other agencies in an attempt to direct the investigation in his favor. We believe her personal friendship with the Chief has blinded her to her responsibilities to the citizens of this community, keeping her from doing her duty to the Town of Quartzsite, and to the employees under Chief Gilbert’s direct supervision.

As an example, over the Memorial Day weekend, Town Manager Taft scheduled interviews with the employees of the police department to be conducted by an outside firm. These interviews are being conducted by a law firm hired by the Town Manager to determine the reasons for a morale problem in the police department, and does not involve an investigation into the criminal allegations reported by your police officers.

The Town Manager and Council do not appear to take these allegations seriously. Alex Taft has failed to follow the Town's Personnel Policy, which would be to place Chief Gilbert on administrative leave pending the results of an investigation of the allegations. Department policy requires an impartial investigator from the Department of Public Safety to conduct a fair and honest investigation. Again this policy was disregarded by the Town Manager.

To those Town Council members that did listen and take the concerns to the Town Manager, the Quartzsite Police Officers Association thanks you for your efforts. You have tried, as is your duty, to have an honest and thorough investigation of Chief Gilbert's actions initiated.

We would like to assure the Town Council and the citizens of Quartzsite that, despite claims to the contrary, the members of the Association stand united behind their allegations concerning Chief Gilbert's conduct. These employees of your town have continued to do their duty and protect the public safety.

Since the allegations were reported, the officers who made the report have been threatened and intimidated. The officers have been told that the Town Council and the citizens of Quartzsite would demand the termination of all of the individuals that have made this stand and signed the complaint. When these threats were brought to the attention of the Town Manager, no actions were taken again in violation of Town Policy.

Left with little other choice, it is the duty of the Quartzsite Police Officers Association to inform the citizens of this community and the rest of the public, that we do not stand behind Chief Gilbert, or condone any of his criminal actions, nor will we jeopardize our own careers by following orders we know are unconstitutional, and by not reporting his criminal behavior.

It is apparent that a vote of No Confidence in Chief Gilbert is not enough to ask for his resignation with cause. This issue is not a popularity contest, and neither the officers nor Chief Gilbert are running for election. This is not about personal friendships or politics. We that stand before you are reporting years of management abuses, misconduct, EEO violations, and political and criminal behavior by Chief Gilbert against employees of your town and your fellow citizens. A criminal investigation by the Department of Public Safety is called for, not only by policy, but in fairness to all involved.

The Quartzsite Police Officers Association has always stood behind the Town of Quartzsite and its citizens, and we will continue to do so. We are asking for two things: an immediate investigation of Chief Gilbert's conduct by D.P.S., and if the allegations against him prove true, demand his immediate termination. We would request that Town Policy be followed, and Chief Gilbert be placed on administrative leave until the investigation is concluded.

Sincerely,

Quartzsite Police Officers Association