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**J&H** **JONES, SKELTON & HOCHULI, P.L.C.**
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November 21, 2025

<u>**VIA EMAIL**</u>

Josh Collins
City Attorney
City of South Salt Lake
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South Salt Lake, UT 84115
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Re: South Salt Lake Police Department Morale Investigation

Dear Josh:

## **INTRODUCTION**

The City of South Salt Lake (City) hired Heather S. White of the law firm Jones Skelton & Hochuli (JSH) to investigate the morale of the South Salt Lake Police Department (Department). This report summarizes the findings of the investigation. It is intended to identify the most significant issues reported during approximately 100 hours of interviews about the existing morale of the Department, how it came to be, and what might be done to address it. It is not the intent of this report to measure the truthfulness or accuracy of the perceptions provided during the interview process. It is also not the intent of this report to recommend to the City what, if any, decisions to make based on the investigation findings.

As part of this investigation, JSH interviewed all 88 current employees of the Department, including sworn and non-sworn employees, and South Salt Lake Chief of Police Danielle Croyle. All employees were ordered to appear and answer questions as

part of the investigation. Their statements were compelled under threat of discipline pursuant to *Garrity v. New. Jersey*, 385 U.S. 493 (1967), and every employee agreed to answer questions after being provided the *Garrity* admonition. Many of the employees were concerned about supervisors and administrators having access to their interviews and hearing their candid assessments. Specific names and actual recordings are not being provided with this report to avoid potential issues related to revealing that information. However, those who asked were told that the Mayor and the City Council members may have access to the interview recordings, and that JSH could not promise they would not ultimately be available to the Chief or the public.

JSH and the City agreed that former employees would not be interviewed since the focus of the investigation is the morale of the employees at the time of the investigation. However, current employees raised issues relating to former employees which are contributing to their current morale. Those are considered in this report to the extent they affect the morale of current employees.

The South Salt Lake Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) conducted a survey of its members in May 2025 that addressed some of the issues involved in this investigation. JSH requested the survey responses several times through the course of the investigation. Different FOP Board members agreed to produce them, and a JSH ShareFile link was provided to the FOP Board President where they could be securely delivered. The FOP never provided the FOP survey responses to JSH.

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## <u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>

Overall, employees at every rank, including the Chief, described morale as significantly diminished. While individual experiences vary, particularly among employees with shorter tenure, the majority of staff, especially those with longer service, reported sustained concerns about leadership communication, disciplinary consistency, training quality, staffing pressures, and internal climate. This decline in morale is not attributed to a single event; rather, it arises from a combination of cultural, operational, and relational factors that have compounded over time.

Employees described a workplace environment where uncertainty, frustration, and a lack of trust have become persistent. Many officers expressed concerns about the perceived unpredictability of leadership decisions, inconsistent disciplinary practices, and a belief that speaking openly may result in negative consequences. Supervisors and line-level officers frequently reported that the chain of command is bypassed, creating confusion and undermining supervisory authority. Civilian employees reported fewer direct negative interactions but consistently noted that the Department feels tense, anxious, and divided.

Concerns about staffing levels and training reductions have contributed to employee burnout and fears about safety. Officers repeatedly emphasized the loss of scenario-based, firearms, and defensive-tactics training, describing the changes as affecting their perceptions of preparedness, confidence, and the ability to respond effectively to high-risk situations. Several employees discussed the personal toll that the

work environment has taken on them, noting symptoms of stress, anxiety, burnout, and, in some cases, impacts on family life.

Communication issues were consistently identified as a primary driver of organizational strain. Employees described frequent changes in direction, lack of clarity about expectations, and minimal explanation for decisions regarding discipline, assignments, or policy. Many stated that the absence of clear communication has contributed to rumor cycles, mistrust, and misunderstandings. These communication concerns overlap with broader perceptions of insufficient collaboration between leadership and staff, limited receptiveness to officer input, and diminished camaraderie.

While some internal units report positive dynamics, the general sentiment across the Department is that the organization is experiencing significant stress and diminished cohesion. Officers and supervisors described feeling detached from leadership, concerned about the long-term trajectory of the Department, and uncertain about their ability to safely and effectively perform their duties.

In contrast to the concerns raised by employees, the Chief described inheriting a Department already struggling with low morale, divided internal culture, and longstanding supervisory and communication problems. She stated that the City hired her specifically to change culture, strengthen accountability, modernize systems, and correct structural deficiencies that she believed had developed over many years. According to the Chief, resistance from some employees—particularly those accustomed to prior practices or disappointed by earlier leadership transitions—

emerged early in her tenure and contributed to negative perceptions about her decisions.

The Chief reported that many of the issues identified by employees, including communication gaps, discipline inconsistencies, and training reductions, were the result of systemic challenges, staffing shortages, or inherited operational constraints rather than intentional disregard for employee needs. She emphasized that her communication was intended to be clear, policy-based, and consistent with expectations from the City. She acknowledges being direct and occasionally frustrated, and sometimes stressed about organizational demands, which may have influenced how her tone was perceived, but disputes claims of public humiliation or retaliation. She attributed confusion and mixed messaging in part to supervisors who she believed did not always relay her directives accurately.

The Chief denied engaging in retaliation or punitive decision-making and stated that all personnel actions were grounded in policy, documented performance concerns, or legal requirements. She asserted that much of the skepticism regarding her leadership stemmed from misinformation, assumptions, or the rapid circulation of rumors rather than firsthand interactions. While acknowledging that her efforts to implement organizational reform were not universally well-received, she maintained that her decisions were made in good faith, with the intent to improve Departmental professionalism, consistency, and long-term stability, and were done both at the request and with the approval of City administration.

## CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY EMPLOYEES IN INTERVIEWS

### SECTION NO. 1: MERIT

Concerns about merit and the process through which leadership positions are awarded emerged as a repeated theme among employees, particularly those with longer tenure and broader institutional history. Many employees expressed that the selection of the current Chief did not follow a transparent or competitive process, and some believed that more qualified internal candidates were overlooked. These concerns were tied less to personal opposition to the Chief and more to a perception that the Department's long-standing norms regarding promotional processes, professional advancement, and earned leadership were disrupted.

A number of officers do not feel the Chief earned the position in the way previous leaders had, or in a way that is traditional in the law enforcement community. For some, this reflected the belief that candidates with more experience within the Department, including individuals who had long served in leadership positions within the Department, should have been considered through an open, formal selection procedure. Officers who had been with the Department for several years expressed frustration that the promotion process did not appear to rely on objective, merit-based criteria such as demonstrable supervisory experience, internal leadership roles, familiarity with Department culture, or operational decision-making backgrounds.

This sentiment was voiced both directly and indirectly. For example, several officers stated that internal candidates who had invested decades in the agency appeared sidelined in favor of a candidate who was perceived as having been

appointed rather than selected through a competitive process. Some interviewees linked this to a broader concern that the Chief came from a professional background that differed substantially from a traditional sworn-officer leadership trajectory, which several described as having historically shaped the Department's expectations for its chief. Officers with long tenure described prior chiefs as rising through the ranks, which they felt fostered loyalty, trust, and shared expectations about the nature of police work. In contrast, they described the current appointment as abrupt and lacking explanation, which contributed to early skepticism and an initial divide in employee perspectives.

Some employees also noted that the manner in which the transition occurred created the perception that personal relationships and external political considerations played a role in the selection. Several officers stated that they would not have objected to the selection itself but were concerned the process lacked opportunities for employee input or observation, such as community meetings, presentations, and panel interviews. This absence led some to conclude that the decision had been pre-determined, reinforcing the belief that merit-based considerations did not guide the appointment.

The perception that the Chief had not gone through a rigorous or competitive selection process continued to influence employee attitudes after her appointment. Officers who later experienced conflicts or disagreements with leadership referenced this origin point as foundational to their concerns about decision-making and leadership style. This contributed to broader issues of trust and acceptance of new policies and expectations.

While not all employees viewed the matter negatively, those who had experience with previous transitions consistently identified the perceived lack of merit-based selection as an early and persistent factor in the Department's morale challenges. These employees emphasized that transparency in leadership appointments is particularly important in an organization where rank, experience, and earned authority carry significant weight.

In sum, concerns related to merit largely center on the perception that the Chief's appointment did not follow a transparent competitive process. This perception has contributed to ongoing skepticism among some employees regarding leadership legitimacy, especially among individuals who felt long-standing norms regarding promotions and advancement were bypassed.

## SECTION NO. 2: PHILOSOPHY OF POLICING

A significant organizational divide within the Department concerns differing philosophies of policing with two primary models emerging from employee interviews: 1) a traditional enforcement-oriented approach focused on crime suppression, tactical readiness, and proactive policing; and 2) a community-oriented model emphasizing public engagement, visibility, and problem-solving partnerships. These differing philosophies, while not inherently incompatible, have become a source of tension and contribute meaningfully to morale challenges within the Department.

Employees who identify with the traditional enforcement philosophy tended to be officers with longer tenure, specialized experience, or training backgrounds. They expressed concern that the Department's recent direction has deprioritized proactive

enforcement. These officers cited reductions in staff, tactical training, loss of specialty units (such as Street Crimes and Gang units), and fewer task-force partnerships. Several officers described a shift away from what they view as core law enforcement functions, including deterrence through presence, assertive response to criminal activity, and opportunities to investigate and interdict repeat offenders.

For example, officers who previously served in or supervised specialty units noted that these teams historically provided targeted enforcement capabilities and opportunities for officers to apply advanced skills. The removal of these units was described as a loss not only of operational efficiency but of professional identity and career development. Officers also expressed the belief that without avenues for proactive enforcement, their role becomes limited to reactionary response, which they feel diminishes both public safety and job satisfaction.

Conversely, employees who favor a community policing approach tended to be newer officers, civilian staff, or individuals with assignments involving public outreach. They tended to view the Department's current direction as positive. These employees emphasized the value of building relationships with residents, increasing approachability, and participating in non-enforcement community activities. For some, these initiatives help improve public trust and reduce confrontational interactions.

Even among those supportive of community policing principles, there was recognition that community engagement must be balanced with operational preparation and officer safety. Several employees commented that while community outreach is

important, it should not replace or overshadow the need for meaningful skills training or enforcement capabilities.

The division between these two philosophies is not solely about personal preference but reflects deeper concerns about the Department's strategic direction. Officers who favor enforcement-based policing expressed unease that the current approach may leave officers ill-prepared for high-risk encounters. Some linked reductions in scenario-based and defensive-tactics training to broader concerns about officer readiness and safety, noting that Departments with strong proactive operations tend to prioritize frequent, hands-on training. These concerns were particularly pronounced among training officers and supervisors with direct responsibility for officer development.

This philosophical divide also influences perceptions of leadership decisions. Officers aligned with the enforcement model often viewed changes under current leadership as diminishing their ability to carry out what they perceive as the essential functions of policing. They described feeling constrained in taking proactive steps such as traffic enforcement, drug interdiction, or gang suppression either because opportunities no longer exist or because they fear disciplinary action for engaging in these activities. In contrast, employees aligned with community policing described leadership's direction as modern, service-oriented, and consistent with national trends.

The divide appears to fall along experiential lines. Officers with substantial tenure or specialized training generally favored a more traditional enforcement approach, while newer officers, many still within their probationary period, reported little experience with

the Department's prior operations and therefore expressed neutral or moderately

positive views regarding the current philosophy. Civilian staff, whose roles are not

centered in enforcement activity, generally reported fewer concerns about the

Department's policing philosophy.

Overall, the differing philosophies of policing within the Department have become

a source of organizational friction. While both enforcement and community policing

approaches are recognized models with legitimate value, the Department's shift toward

the latter without broad-based consensus, has contributed to a sense of disconnection

among portions of the workforce. These differences in philosophy influence how

employees perceive operational decisions, leadership priorities, and the future direction

of the Department.

## SECTION NO. 3: DEMEANOR

Employees consistently identified concerns related to the Chief's demeanor,

citing issues of emotional variability, tone, and communication style. These concerns

were expressed by individuals across a range of ranks and assignments. While some

civilian employees reported only positive or neutral interactions, the majority of sworn

officers described the Chief's demeanor as contributing significantly to the Department's

morale challenges.

A recurring theme was the perception that the Chief makes decisions or

communicates directives in ways that appear emotional or reactive rather than

measured or deliberative. Several supervisors stated that in staff meetings or

operational discussions, raising legitimate concerns resulted in abrupt or dismissive responses.

Employees also reported incidents where the Chief's tone escalated unexpectedly, including occasions where officers or supervisors were reprimanded loudly in the presence of others. Such exchanges were described as unprofessional and unnecessary, even when the underlying issue may have warranted correction. Several employees stated that they had either observed or heard from credible sources that officers were yelled at in hallways, briefing rooms, or administrative offices. These reports included descriptions of the Chief raising her voice at officers in public or semi-public settings, creating discomfort among witnesses and reinforcing concerns about unpredictability in interactions.

A number of officers described instances where the Chief's demeanor shifted rapidly within the same interaction. Employees reported that these abrupt shifts contributed to a workplace environment in which staff felt they needed to monitor their words carefully or avoid contact altogether. Even employees who expressed generally positive views of the Chief acknowledged that her demeanor could appear abrupt or changeable depending on the day or circumstances. Civilian staff described occasional instances where a conversation was cut short abruptly or where the Chief appeared distracted, stressed, or uninterested in engagement. While these employees often attributed such moments to the demands of the role, they also noted that the Department overall feels more tense and less relaxed than in previous years, with employees becoming more guarded in the Chief's presence.

These concerns about demeanor extended beyond interpersonal communication and were described as influencing broader organizational dynamics. Supervisors reported that officers frequently asked whether the Chief was in a good mood before deciding whether to discuss routine issues with her. This sense of apprehension contributed to delays in communication, reluctance to raise concerns, and reduced willingness to seek clarification about expectations. Collectively, the concerns about demeanor reflect an underlying perception among many employees that interactions with the Chief are unpredictable, emotionally charged, or lacking in professionalism. While not universal, and while some employees reported positive or neutral experiences, the consistency with which these concerns were raised, indicates that perceptions of the Chief's demeanor has played a significant role in shaping the Department's current morale challenges.

## SECTION NO. 4: DISCIPLINE

Concerns surrounding discipline represent one of the most significant and frequently discussed themes raised during employee interviews. Virtually every group within the Department identified issues relating to disciplinary consistency, proportionality, transparency, and the manner in which discipline is communicated and administered. While the specifics varied between employees, the overarching theme was a widespread belief that the discipline system under the current administration feels unpredictable, unevenly enforced, and sometimes excessive.

Many officers expressed fear of being disciplined, even for minor mistakes or routine decisions inherent in policing. Employees reported that this fear has contributed

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to a conservative, risk-avoidant culture in which officers perform only the minimum required tasks to avoid drawing attention. Several officers described avoiding proactive policing activity such as traffic stops, interdiction, or investigative detentions out of concern that any misstep could result in disproportionate disciplinary consequences.

Supervisors shared similar concerns. Multiple sergeants and lieutenants stated that discipline imposed on their subordinates often lacked explanation or context making it difficult for them to support or reinforce decisions within their teams. Some described being excluded from disciplinary investigations or corrective processes involving the officers they supervise which they felt undermined their supervisory authority and created confusion. Others stated that when they attempted to advocate for an officer or provide context, their input was dismissed or interpreted as disagreement.

A number of employees reported witnessing or experiencing discipline delivered in public or semi-public settings, which they believed degraded professional norms and contributed to a culture of embarrassment and fear. Examples included officers described as being reprimanded in hallways, briefing rooms, or in front of other staff members. In one account, an officer stated that the Chief reprimanded them loudly in the presence of another colleague, which they perceived as humiliating and disproportionate to the issue at hand. Several employees stated that even when they had not directly experienced such interactions, they had repeatedly heard about enough similar incidents to conclude that this pattern was recurring.

Officers also expressed concerns about the absence of progressive discipline. Several employees stated that minor or first-time mistakes often resulted in formal

documentation or punitive action rather than verbal counseling or corrective coaching.

For instance, officers described situations in which minor administrative errors,

miscommunications, or routine tactical decisions resulted in written reprimands or

formal investigations. Many employees noted that documentation occurred quickly and

without opportunities to correct or clarify the issue beforehand. They further expressed

concern that such documentation could affect future promotional opportunities, lateral

transfers, or employment with other agencies, amplifying the sense of risk associated

with routine duties.

An additional theme involved concerns that discipline is at times applied

inconsistently across employees or situations. Officers noted that similar incidents

resulted in different outcomes depending on the individuals involved or the

circumstances under which the issue came to the administration's attention. Some

supervisors reported that actions by certain officers resulted in immediate disciplinary

measures while similar or more significant conduct by others did not appear to be

addressed. Employees who felt they were not favored expressed greater fear that their

actions would be scrutinized more harshly.

Employees also identified concerns with the level of documentation required for

minor issues. Numerous officers stated that they felt micromanaged by the volume of

memos, emails, or corrective notes issued for what they perceived as minor or

inconsequential matters. This level of documentation contributed to feelings of hyper-

surveillance and concern that minor errors would accumulate into negative personnel

records. Several employees described being told verbally that the documentation did

not mean anything but expressed that the mere existence of such created anxiety about long-term career implications both within and outside of the Department.

Another significant concern involved the removal or reassignment of officers from specialty positions, training responsibilities, or collateral duties as a form of discipline or consequence. Some officers recounted being removed from assignments after expressing disagreement with leadership decisions or after incidents they believed did not warrant such actions. These reassignments were seen as punitive in effect, even if not formally characterized as discipline, and contributed to perceptions of retaliation.

Finally, a recurring observation across interviews was that the confidentiality inherent in personnel matters contributes to rumors and assumptions in the absence of clear communication. Employees acknowledged that they do not, and should not, know the specifics of others' discipline. However, the lack of explanation or general communication about expectations or standards has led to widespread speculation. This speculation, employees reported, creates anxiety and mistrust.

In summary, concerns about discipline center on perceptions of inconsistency, lack of progressive approach, public or overly harsh administration, and a broader sense of unpredictability. These concerns contribute substantially to employee stress, inhibit proactive policing, and have eroded confidence in leadership's fairness and transparency.

## SECTION NO. 5: RETALIATION

Concerns about retaliation constitute one of the most deeply felt and widely expressed issues raised during the interviews. While the specific experiences varied, a

substantial portion of employees reported either personal experiences or direct observations that led them to believe that disagreement with the Chief, questioning a decision, or raising operational concerns could result in negative consequences. This perception has created a pervasive sense of caution within the Department, contributing significantly to low morale, reduced initiative, and diminished trust.

Many employees stated they feel uncomfortable expressing dissent, offering alternative viewpoints, or identifying perceived problems because they fear the response may be punitive. The concern was not limited to formal disciplinary action. Employees frequently described more subtle forms of consequences such as reassignment, removal from collateral duties, exclusion from opportunities, or a noticeable change in how they were treated by leadership.

A number of officers reported experiencing situations in which they believed they were singled out or targeted after raising concerns or disagreeing with a directive. One officer described that after questioning a decision related to training, they were abruptly removed without explanation from an ancillary assignment they previously held. Another officer reported that following a disagreement over a supervisory decision, they perceived a clear shift in how they were treated, describing interactions as curt or dismissive and feeling more closely watched afterward.

Supervisors also expressed concern about retaliation when carrying out their supervisory responsibilities. Several sergeants reported that when they attempted to communicate concerns raised by their officers, they felt the Chief interpreted these comments as personal challenges rather than operational observations. In some cases,

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supervisors described receiving corrective feedback or being spoken to sternly for

relaying concerns they believed were routine matters within their role. These

experiences led some supervisors to avoid elevating officer concerns.

A particularly common perception was that officers or supervisors who

questioned the Chief are more frequently scrutinized or more likely to face adverse

employment actions. Employees reported that certain individuals were removed from

specialty positions or denied opportunities following disagreements, even when the

underlying issue appeared minor. These dynamics, whether rooted in fact or perception,

were reported to have a chilling effect on the Department's willingness to communicate

openly.

Multiple employees stated that the fear of retaliation has created a workplace

environment where individuals are constantly anxious. The expression appeared

repeatedly throughout interviews. Officers said they were uncertain how their actions or

comments might be interpreted and whether those interpretations could lead to

repercussions. Some officers described modifying their daily behavior to avoid potential

consequences. Examples included avoiding going upstairs unless necessary, limiting

proactive policing activity, refraining from expressing concerns during staff meetings, or

choosing not to volunteer for certain assignments.

Concerns about retaliation were expressed not only by employees who

personally reported adverse experiences but also by employees who had not been

disciplined or reassigned themselves. Many stated that they had observed enough

examples involving colleagues to conclude that speaking openly carried risk. This

contributed to a culture in which employees exchange concerns privately among peers but avoid raising them through formal channels or directly with leadership. That further leads to gossip and rumors, further fueling misinformation and mistrust.

In summary, perceptions of retaliation within the Department are widespread and deeply embedded. These concerns have influenced communication, willingness to provide feedback, initiative in operational duties, and overall trust in leadership. Even when employees acknowledged that the Chief may not intend to retaliate, the cumulative effect of observed interactions, reassignments, and communication patterns has created a lasting impression that disagreeing or speaking candidly may result in negative consequences.

## SECTION NO. 6: STAFFING

Staffing concerns were raised by nearly every employee interviewed spanning sworn and civilian personnel, supervisors, line-level officers, and support staff. The issues described were not limited to simple understaffing but reflected a more complex interplay of vacancies, turnover, hiring challenges, training deficits, and diminished experience levels within the Department. Taken together, these factors have created a sustained sense of strain that affects operational readiness, officer safety, morale, and professional development opportunities.

Employees consistently reported that staffing shortages have restricted the Department's ability to engage in proactive policing. Officers stated that patrol shifts are often staffed only at levels sufficient to respond to calls for service, leaving little capacity for traffic enforcement, drug interdiction, community contacts, or supplemental

investigative work. Supervisors described that minimum staffing levels have become the default rather than the exception, requiring frequent coverage adjustments, forced overtime, and reliance on officers who may already be fatigued.

Several employees reported difficulty obtaining approved time off due to shortages, leading to increased burnout and, in some cases, significant strain on family life. Officers described situations where they routinely worked extended shifts, covered vacancies without relief, or were asked to adjust personal schedules to accommodate staffing gaps. Some employees stated they avoided requesting leave because they did not want to place additional stress on their colleagues or supervisors, further contributing to exhaustion and a decline in morale.

Concerns were also raised regarding the quality and readiness of new hires. Many officers noted that the Department has recently hired individuals who were released or faced disciplinary issues at other agencies. Employees expressed unease that these hires sometimes faced similar or more serious concerns than those for which the Department had previously terminated or disciplined officers. This dynamic was perceived as undermining internal standards and contributing to frustration among employees who maintain high expectations for professional performance and culture.

Supervisors also described concerns that new hires often lacked adequate mentoring due to the loss of experienced officers and reduced training opportunities. With fewer senior officers available on shift, and with many experienced staff expressing intention to leave if conditions do not improve, employees worry that institutional

knowledge is being rapidly depleted. Several officers stated that newer officers have fewer opportunities to learn from experienced mentors.

A number of interviews indicated that employees directly link staffing challenges to officer safety. Officers reported that responding to calls with minimal personnel leaves them feeling vulnerable during volatile situations, particularly in high-risk encounters or when dealing with combative subjects, mental health crises, or unknown threats. Several employees stated they sometimes delayed entering scenes or awaited backup longer than they would have in the past due to insufficient staffing on their shift. These delays, while necessary for safety, were described as increasing stress and potentially affecting service to the community.

Staffing shortages also restrict the Department's ability to support specialized units, collateral duties, and task-force assignments. Employees noted that several specialty roles have been eliminated or unfilled because patrol staffing cannot absorb the absence. Officers described this not merely as a loss of opportunity but as a reduction in the Department's overall capacity to address certain crime types.

Attrition remains a significant factor amplified by low morale. Multiple employees stated that they have either recently applied to other police departments, are actively considering leaving, or intend to leave if conditions do not improve. Estimates provided during interviews indicate that between eight and fifteen officers may depart if the current trajectory remains unchanged. Several employees noted that colleagues with substantial experience have already left, citing work environment concerns rather than compensation or external opportunities as the primary reason.

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Civilian staff also acknowledged the strain caused by staffing shortages. They reported feeling pressure to absorb additional responsibilities when administrative tasks increase due to documentation or disciplinary matters. While many civilian employees expressed positive internal dynamics within their own teams, they noted that the overall atmosphere of stress within the Department impacts their workloads and contributes to broader tension.

In sum, employees described an environment in which they believe limited personnel, high turnover, reduced experience, and diminished mentoring capacity contribute to widespread burnout. These conditions not only affect officer well-being but also significantly influence morale, perceived safety, and employees' confidence in the Department's long-term trajectory.

## SECTION NO. 7: TRAINING

Training emerged as one of the most consistent and consequential concerns raised in employee interviews. Across ranks and assignments, employees described a significant decline in the frequency, quality, and practicality of hands-on training, particularly scenario-based instruction, defensive tactics, and firearms. Officers emphasized that these reductions have affected confidence, readiness, and personal safety, and they believe the changes are materially impacting both individual and Departmental performance.

Employees expressed that training under the current administration has shifted away from practical, skills-based instruction toward classroom-heavy sessions focused on compliance topics such as sexual harassment and policy interpretation. While

employees recognized the importance of these subjects, they reported that such training has increasingly displaced scenario-based simulations, tactical decision-making practice, and high-risk encounter preparation. Many officers stated their belief that the current balance does not adequately reflect the realities of police work, where physical skills, judgment under stress, and tactical coordination are essential.

Officers reported that the Department previously held regular, structured training scenarios covering building searches, crisis intervention calls, domestic violence responses, high-risk stops, and officer-safety procedures that allowed teams to practice communication, coordination, and de-escalation under realistic conditions. Employees described these trainings as critical for building muscle memory and improving decision-making under pressure.

Similarly, officers expressed notable concerns about the reduction in defensive tactics training. Interviewees described that hands-on skills such as control holds, handcuffing techniques, takedown procedures, and ground defense were practiced infrequently, if at all. Supervisors stated that without regular reinforcement, these perishable skills degrade quickly, increasing the risk of injuries to both officers and subjects during physical encounters. Officers also noted their belief that decreased defensive tactics training undermines confidence, which in turn can cause hesitation or poor decision-making during high-stress encounters.

Firearms training was another significant issue. Employees reported that firearms practice has been reduced from multiple full-day training sessions to only a few hours, primarily focused on annual or semiannual qualification requirements. Officers stated

that qualification alone does not provide meaningful preparation for real-world

scenarios, where decision-making, movement, communication, and environmental

stressors are present. Several officers stated their belief that less firearms training

contributes to lower proficiency and, consequently, increased risk during armed

encounters.

Supervisors responsible for training raised additional concerns about the ability to

maintain Department standards. Some reported that when they attempted to expand or

reinstate scenario-based training, they were discouraged or met with criticism. Others

recounted occasions where proposals for more comprehensive or practical training

were denied, postponed, or deprioritized. A sergeant involved in training described a

meeting in which concerns about decreased defensive tactics and scenario-based

training were dismissed and said that they felt shut down when attempting to provide

research or context. These experiences created apprehension among supervisors

about raising future training needs.

Employees also linked training deficiencies to broader issues of officer safety and

Department liability. Officers consistently stressed their feelings that reduced scenario

practice leads to slower reaction times, reduced tactical coordination, and increased risk

of escalation during encounters. Some expressed concern that reduced training could

expose officers and the City to heightened risk of use-of-force incidents or civil liability.

Several officers acknowledged that real-world encounters require split-second judgment

informed by repetitive practice, and they stated that the lack of such practice has made

them feel hesitant or less prepared.

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Newer officers were described as disproportionately impacted by training gaps. With fewer experienced officers available to mentor them due to attrition, rotations, and reassignments, new hires rely more heavily on formal training programs to build foundational skills. Multiple supervisors stated their belief that without adequate scenario-based instruction, newer officers may be entering the field with insufficient exposure to high-risk situations, increasing the probability of mistakes and reducing their confidence.

Employees also expressed concern that the Department's reputation for limited training may affect recruitment and retention. Several officers reported that candidates applying from other agencies asked pointed questions about training frequency, and employees expressed concern that the Department is developing a reputation for inadequate preparation, which could hinder future hiring efforts.

In summary, employees overwhelmingly view current training practices as insufficient and misaligned with the operational demands of policing. Reductions in scenario-based training, defensive tactics practice, and firearms instruction have contributed to feelings of diminished officer confidence and heightened concerns about safety and liability. Supervisors feel constrained in addressing these issues, and newer officers report entering the field with fewer opportunities for skill development. Collectively, these training shortcomings are perceived as having implications for both officer well-being and public safety.

## SECTION NO. 8: MENTAL HEALTH

Concerns related to mental health emerged as one of the most personal and consequential themes reported by employees. Nearly one quarter of employees described experiencing stress, anxiety, burnout, depression, or related symptoms that they directly attributed to the current work environment within the Department. These concerns were not isolated to a single division or rank. Sworn officers, supervisors, and some civilian staff reported significant emotional and psychological strain associated with daily operations and workplace dynamics.

Employees frequently described a persistent sense of dread associated with coming to work, particularly with entering the upstairs administrative area where the Chief's office is located. Many officers stated that they attempt to avoid going upstairs unless required, explaining that they experience physical symptoms of anxiety when anticipating interactions with leadership. Several employees used the phrase walking on eggshells to describe their daily experience, indicating an ongoing fear of being reprimanded or receiving negative attention for routine actions or minor mistakes.

A number of officers shared that they have experienced panic-like symptoms or difficulty sleeping due to work-related stress. Some described waking during the night thinking about incidents at work, replaying prior conversations, or anticipating potential disciplinary action. Others reported experiencing fatigue, loss of motivation, or difficulty concentrating. Multiple employees stated that their emotional resilience has eroded due to the current environment.

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Several employees disclosed that the stress they experience at work has carried over into their personal lives. Officers reported increased irritability at home, strain in relationships, and reduced quality of family time. Some expressed concern that their families have noticed changes in their demeanor, mood, or availability, and that workplace stress is now affecting household stability. One employee stated that their spouse urged them to seek alternative employment due to the toll the job was taking on their family life. Another described withdrawing from family activities because they felt drained after work and emotionally unprepared to engage with loved ones. Two officers expressly admitted to suicidal ideation.

Some officers reported seeking professional mental health support, including therapy or counseling. These employees noted that while the inherent risks and traumas of police work are well understood in the profession, the stress they are experiencing now feels different. It is more chronic, internally generated, and driven by workplace climate rather than by exposure to critical incidents. This distinction was echoed by several individuals who stated that while they had always managed the operational stresses of policing effectively, the current administrative environment has become a more significant source of strain.

Supervisors raised concerns about the long-term implications of this level of stress on officer safety, decision-making, and professional performance. They described incidents in which overwhelmed or fatigued officers appeared less engaged, less communicative, or slower to respond during calls. While these instances were not characterized as critical failures, supervisors emphasized that chronic stress and

burnout reduce officers' ability to navigate high-stakes situations with clarity and sound judgment.

Employees also indicated that the mental health impact is exacerbated by a perceived lack of support or acknowledgment from leadership. Some officers stated that when they attempted to raise concerns about workload, training, or morale, they felt dismissed or criticized, which further diminished their sense of psychological safety. This dynamic contributes to a feedback loop in which employees suppress concerns, internalize stress, and withdraw from communication, further isolating themselves and worsening morale.

Although civilian staff reported fewer direct experiences of panic or dread, several noted that the overall atmosphere within the Department feels tense and emotionally taxing. They described supporting sworn staff who appear fatigued or overwhelmed. They further expressed concern that the Department's internal challenges may contribute to burnout among employees who provide essential administrative support.

In summary, mental health concerns within the Department are significant and widespread. Employees described high levels of stress, emotional exhaustion, and fear-based tension that extend beyond the normal demands of police work. These issues affect personal well-being, interpersonal relationships, family dynamics, and operational performance. The consistency and depth of these reports indicate that mental health challenges have become a defining feature of the Department's current climate.

**<u>SECTION NO. 9: COMMUNICATION</u>**

Communication concerns within the Department were described by employees as pervasive, structural, and central to the Department's broader morale challenges. Nearly every employee referenced issues involving unclear expectations, inconsistent directives, limited explanation for decisions, and difficulty obtaining timely or accurate information. These concerns were raised across all ranks and work groups and were cited as contributing to what they perceive as confusion, frustration, and a sense of organizational instability.

A recurring theme was the perception that communication from leadership is inconsistent or incomplete. Employees frequently described receiving directives that lack context, are issued abruptly, or change without warning. Supervisors reported that they often learn about changes at the same time as line-level officers, leaving them without the opportunity to prepare, interpret, or support implementation. This dynamic undermines supervisory authority and creates challenges for managing expectations within their teams.

Officers described situations in which instructions changed multiple times over short periods, sometimes within the same shift or operational cycle. These abrupt changes led employees to express uncertainty about what standards or procedures are currently in effect. Several officers stated that they hesitated to act decisively in the field because they were unsure whether their understanding of Department expectations remained accurate. Others noted that inconsistent messaging contributed to repeated

questions, increased administrative burden, and frustration among staff who sought clarity.

One of the most frequently cited concerns involved the lack of explanation surrounding disciplinary decisions, promotional choices, and reassignments. Employees acknowledged that personnel matters must remain confidential but stated that the absence of general communication about expectations or reasoning creates an information void. In this void, rumors and speculation proliferate. Employees described relying on informal channels such as hearsay from peers to understand decisions or anticipate potential consequences. This pattern contributes to uncertainty, mistrust, and what many referred to as a rumor-driven or gossip-heavy environment.

Some supervisors expressed concern that when they attempted to seek clarification from leadership about directives or decisions, their efforts were interpreted as resistance or criticism. This perception discouraged them from asking questions on behalf of their teams, resulting in officers receiving limited or ambiguous information. Several employees—particularly newer officers—stated that they often chose not to seek clarification out of concern that doing so could be interpreted negatively or draw unwanted attention.

Employees also described challenges with upward communication. Many reported that raising concerns or offering feedback led to feeling dismissed, shut down, or criticized. Some officers recounted specific instances in which suggestions were met with immediate rejection, leading them to conclude that leadership was unreceptive to

operational input. This perception significantly diminished employees' willingness to bring forward concerns about officer safety, workload, or training.

Civilian employees noted that limited communication often resulted in increased workload or confusion as they attempted to interpret expectations related to reporting, documentation, or administrative procedures. They reported that changes in administrative processes sometimes came without sufficient notice or explanation, creating inefficiencies and making it difficult to support sworn staff effectively.

Another theme involved the absence of consistent Department-wide communication channels. Employees stated that information was not always distributed evenly across shifts or divisions, leading to disparities in awareness. Officers on different shifts sometimes received conflicting versions of the same instruction or learned of updates secondhand rather than through formal communication. This contributed to frustration and reinforced the perception of a lack of coordinated communication strategy.

Finally, employees linked communication concerns to broader issues of trust and stability. Many stated that poor communication has become a defining characteristic of the Department's internal climate, influencing perceptions of fairness, transparency, and leadership effectiveness. Employees described feeling disconnected from decision-making processes and uncertain about the Department's direction. This disconnect has contributed to a sense of organizational drift, in which employees struggle to understand overarching priorities or the rationale behind significant changes.

In summary, communication challenges within the Department are systemic and far-reaching. Employees report inconsistent directives, limited explanation for decisions, difficulty obtaining clarification, and a pervasive reliance on informal information networks. These issues contribute to confusion, reduce confidence in leadership, and play a significant role in the Department's current morale challenges.

**SECTION NO. 10: SPECIALTY ASSIGNMENTS**

Specialty assignments were reported to play an important role in officer development, morale, and retention within law enforcement agencies. Employees consistently emphasized that such assignments, including internal specialized units and external task-force participation, provide opportunities for professional growth, skill development, and increased job satisfaction. Within the Department, the reduction or elimination of several specialty roles has become a significant point of concern.

Employees reported that multiple internal specialty units, including Street Crimes, Gang, and VFAST assignments, have been disbanded or left unstaffed due to staffing shortages, changes in Department priorities, or decisions made by leadership. Officers described these units as historically central to proactive enforcement, targeted crime reduction, and officer engagement. Their removal has been experienced not only as a loss of operational capability but as a loss of professional identity for officers who valued or aspired to these positions.

For officers who previously served in specialty roles, the eliminations have had a significant emotional impact. Employees recounted assignments they were proud of and believed were effective in addressing crime trends, only to see these opportunities

removed without what they perceived as clear explanations. Some officers described feeling that years of effort, training, and specialized expertise were undervalued or rendered irrelevant when their units were disbanded. Supervisors echoed these sentiments, noting that specialty units often served as motivational anchors that kept officers invested in the Department long-term.

Officers also expressed concern that the lack of specialty opportunities restricts career growth. Many described the Department as historically offering diverse avenues for professional development, such as investigations, narcotics, gang enforcement, school resource work, and regional task-force assignments. With these opportunities diminished, officers reported feeling stagnant, particularly those who had a particular interest in certain areas. Several stated they were considering seeking employment elsewhere solely to obtain opportunities that no longer exist at the Department.

A related concern involves external taskforce and collaborative assignments. Employees reported that opportunities to work with multi-jurisdictional units, which are generally pursued during off-duty hours or through supplemental arrangement, have been reduced or denied. Officers emphasized that these assignments not only provide valuable experience but also strengthen interagency relationships and elevate the Department's profile regionally. Several employees noted that such roles come at no cost to the Department because they are performed during off-duty hours or are funded by external agencies. Despite this, officers reported that participation has become more difficult to obtain or has been limited based on perceived favoritism or internal dynamics.

Officers also described situations in which colleagues were removed from specialty roles following disagreements with leadership or conflicts related to discipline. While these issues tie into concerns addressed in earlier sections, the impact on specialty assignments was uniquely felt because such removals effectively stalled officers' career progress and diminished morale within their peer groups. Even when formal discipline was not imposed, losing a specialty assignment was perceived as punitive in effect.

Employees consistently reported that specialty assignments serve as a critical motivator, offering variety in daily work, opportunities to develop advanced skills, and a sense of purpose beyond routine patrol. The absence of these opportunities has contributed to frustration, disengagement, and increased consideration of employment at other agencies where specialized roles remain available and valued.

Finally, employees noted operational impacts resulting from the loss of specialty units. Supervisors stated that without dedicated teams to focus on gang activity, street crime, and violent offenders, patrol officers are forced to address these issues reactively rather than strategically. This reactive posture was described as less effective and more stressful, further contributing to both workload pressures and perceptions that the Department has lost meaningful enforcement capacity.

In summary, the reduction of specialty assignments within the Department has had far-reaching consequences for morale, professional development, operational capability, and retention. Employees view specialty opportunities as essential components of a healthy police department, and the loss of these assignments has

contributed to a sense of stagnation, reduced motivation, and concern about the

Department's long-term trajectory.

**<u>SECTION NO. 11: MICROMANAGEMENT</u>**

Concerns regarding micromanagement were expressed widely across divisions,

ranks, and workgroups within the Department. Employees consistently reported that the

Chief frequently bypasses the established chain of command, issuing direct instructions

to line-level officers, revoking or modifying supervisory decisions, or intervening in day-

to-day operational matters traditionally handled at the sergeant or lieutenant level.

These practices were described as creating confusion, undermining supervisory

authority, and affecting the efficiency and confidence of both supervisors and

subordinate officers.

Supervisors articulated the issue most clearly. Of sixteen supervisors

interviewed, thirteen reported that either they were being micromanaged, or they

routinely observed similar behavior toward other supervisors. Many described situations

in which they learned that their directives to officers had been overridden by the Chief

without prior discussion or explanation. This unilateral approach left supervisors feeling

sidelined, unsure of how to manage their teams effectively, and concerned that they

would be held responsible for decisions they did not make.

Employees at the sergeant level noted that they were frequently excluded from

communication loops regarding decisions directly affecting their officers, including

changes to assignments, discipline, or operational expectations. Some reported that

they had been informed by officers rather than by leadership of new instructions issued

directly by the Chief. This dynamic not only created confusion but also left supervisors feeling they lacked the authority or clarity needed to perform their roles.

Line-level officers reported that direct communication from the Chief on operational issues, while not inherently problematic, often came in ways that conflicted with supervisory instructions or established practices. Officers stated that when they attempted to reconcile conflicting guidance, they faced uncertainty about which directive to follow. Some officers expressed concern that asking supervisors for clarification might place supervisors in an adversarial position with the Chief, leading to caution or hesitancy in seeking guidance.

Employees described several operational consequences of micromanagement. In some instances, officers said they waited longer to initiate routine tasks because they anticipated that the Chief might contradict the decisions of supervisors. Others expressed concern that rapid shifts in expectations made it difficult to perform tasks consistently or to anticipate how decisions would be evaluated.

Supervisors also reported that micromanagement affected morale among their teams. They explained that when officers see their supervisors' decisions overridden, ignored, or contradicted, it erodes confidence in the supervisory structure and discourages officers from seeking advice from their immediate leaders. Supervisors feel this tension not only diminishes their credibility but also creates uncertainty about their own standing within the Department.

Some employees stated that micromanagement contributed to a sense of instability within the organization. They reported that the Chief's involvement in day-to-

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day details, such as directing individual calls for service, instructing officers where to patrol, or intervening in discretionary decisions, created the perception of inconsistent oversight rather than strategic leadership. Employees described this pattern as reactive rather than proactive, with directives sometimes shifting in response to isolated incidents rather than being grounded in broader policy.

Several employees expressed concern that micromanagement exacerbated existing communication challenges. Officers described receiving direct messages or guidance from the Chief through email or in-person conversations without corresponding communication to supervisors, leading to mismatches in information. In some cases, officers expressed reluctance to follow directions from supervisors when they believed—rightly or wrongly—that the Chief would later contradict or modify those instructions.

Several supervisors also noted a belief that consistent micromanagement has discouraged initiative. They explained that when officers anticipate decisions will be second-guessed or overridden, they naturally become more cautious, less innovative, and less engaged in problem-solving. This hesitancy, they emphasized, affects both performance and morale, particularly among motivated officers who previously thrived under a more decentralized, trust-based supervisory structure.

In summary, employee concerns about micromanagement within the Department center on what was described as the Chief's frequent bypassing of the chain of command, inconsistent or conflicting direction, and direct intervention in matters typically reserved for supervisors. These actions are seen as significantly affecting

supervisory authority, operational consistency, officer initiative, and overall morale. The

consistency and depth of these reports suggest that micromanagement is a major

contributing factor to organizational dysfunction and employee dissatisfaction.

## SECTION NO. 12: COLLABORATION

Employees consistently raised concerns regarding collaboration within the

Department, describing an organizational culture in which staff feel their input is neither

welcomed nor meaningfully considered. Across sworn and civilian roles, employees

reported that efforts to offer feedback, raise operational concerns, or propose

improvements were often met with resistance, dismissal, or an immediate shutdown of

discussion. This perception has contributed to declines in morale, diminished

innovation, and a reduction in constructive problem-solving within the Department.

A common theme described by many employees is the belief that the Chief

appears unreceptive to suggestions, even those made respectfully or supported by

operational experience. Officers and supervisors recounted situations in which they

attempted to propose changes to training, equipment, scheduling, or policy

implementation, only to have their ideas rejected without discussion. Some employees

described presenting data or research to support their recommendations but noted that

their materials were dismissed as irrelevant or unnecessary.

These interactions were described not simply as disagreements over policy but

as patterns indicating that dissenting or alternative viewpoints were unwelcome. For

example, some employees noted that when they attempted to explain the operational

consequences of reduced scenario-based training, the Chief responded sharply or

declined to continue the conversation. These experiences led supervisors in particular

to conclude that raising concerns carried personal or professional risk.

Employees also stated that attempts at collaboration often resulted in corrective

conversations rather than dialogue. Several interviewees described feeling talked down

to, admonished, or told that their perspective was wrong without an opportunity to

explain their reasoning. This dynamic contributed to reluctance among staff to initiate

conversations about operational needs or workplace challenges. Some employees

described a pattern in which discussions shifted from constructive problem-solving to

lectures or criticism, further discouraging open exchange.

Sworn personnel, especially those with supervisory responsibilities, stated that

they felt excluded from decision-making processes that traditionally involve collaborative

planning. These employees offered examples such as changes to shift structures, new

expectations for report writing, and adjustments to enforcement priorities that were

announced without soliciting input from those responsible for implementing them.

Supervisors emphasized that meaningful collaboration requires information-sharing and

dialogue before decisions are finalized, not only after.

In addition, employees described the broader climate within the Department as

unsupportive of collaborative engagement. Several officers noted that when colleagues

attempted to raise concerns during staff meetings or training sessions, they witnessed

those individuals being shut down, corrected in front of others, or treated dismissively.

These observations further reinforced fears that speaking up could draw negative

attention. As a result, many employees stated that they avoid offering suggestions, even

in situations where they believe Department performance or officer safety could be improved.

Civilian staff also reported feeling that collaborative opportunities were limited. While some described positive working relationships within their own units, they noted that communication across divisions often felt one-directional, with instructions flowing down but little opportunity for feedback flowing up. This dynamic contributed to inefficiencies and misunderstandings when implementing administrative or procedural changes.

Several employees stated that collaboration has declined markedly compared to prior administrations. They described experiencing more open discussions in the past where supervisors and officers could jointly resolve problems or propose solutions without fear of reprisal. Under the current administration, employees reported such open exchanges are rare and that the Department's culture increasingly discourages candid conversation.

Some employees also linked the perceived lack of collaboration to the Department's broader morale issues. They noted that when employees feel unheard or undervalued, they disengage from initiatives and limit themselves to the minimum required responsibilities. This disengagement was described not as defiance but as self-protection in an environment where offering suggestions feels risky.

In summary, concerns regarding collaboration center on employees' perception that leadership is unreceptive to feedback, dismissive of suggestions, and resistant to

shared problem-solving. These dynamics have materially affected morale, suppressed innovation, and reduced employees' willingness to communicate openly.

## SECTION NO. 13: CAMARADERIE

Camaraderie was described by officers and civilian staff as significantly diminished within the Department. Employees noted that while pockets of strong interpersonal relationships remain, particularly within certain shifts or units, the Department as a whole no longer exhibits the collective cohesion that many described as a defining characteristic of the Department in years past. This loss of camaraderie was attributed to a combination of organizational stressors, leadership dynamics, fear of retaliation, and the cumulative effects of morale decline.

Many employees expressed that the Department once prided itself on a close-knit culture where officers and staff supported each other both professionally and personally. Several employees described the Department historically as a family with high levels of trust and a sense of belonging that sustained officers through difficult calls and high-risk situations.

In contrast, employees now describe a workplace environment marked by tension and fragmentation. Many reported that officers are increasingly isolated, choosing to focus on their own responsibilities rather than engage broadly with colleagues. Some described shift groups as becoming more insulated, with limited cross-shift interaction or collaboration. Others reported that officers who previously socialized together outside of work now do so less frequently.

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A recurring theme was that fear of retaliation or negative attention has altered how employees interact with one another. Several employees stated that because individuals worry about being associated with colleagues who are out of favor with leadership, they avoid being seen together in certain spaces or avoid discussing certain topics in front of others. This has contributed to a sense of guardedness that employees described as incompatible with the trust-based environment necessary for effective police work.

Some officers linked the loss of camaraderie to staffing shortages and operational pressures. With fewer officers available and heavier workloads, employees reported having less time to debrief after difficult calls, provide peer support, or participate in informal team building. Supervisors noted that understaffing has reduced opportunities for positive interactions, such as shared meals, group training sessions, or downtime between calls.

Civilian employees also noted changes in workplace dynamics. While several described positive relationships within their own divisions, they acknowledged that the overall atmosphere in the Department feels strained and less collegial than in prior years. They observed that sworn employees appear more stressed, more withdrawn, and less likely to engage casually with coworkers, which affects the tone and comfort level of the broader organization.

Employees emphasized that camaraderie is an important component of both morale and operational effectiveness. Officers noted that trust among colleagues is essential during high-risk calls where team members must rely on each other's

judgment, coordination, and support. Some supervisors expressed concern that the erosion of camaraderie could impact communication, teamwork, and decision-making in the field. They noted that when employees feel isolated or unsupported, they may be less confident or less communicative during emergencies, potentially affecting safety outcomes.

Despite these concerns, many employees stated that camaraderie within certain tight-knit subgroups remains strong. Shifts that have maintained consistent personnel or units with longstanding working relationships often exhibit higher levels of mutual support. However, these pockets of cohesion were described as exceptions rather than indicators of overall Department climate.

In summary, camaraderie within the Department has diminished significantly with employees reporting increased isolation, guarded communication, and reduced opportunities for connection. While strong relationships persist within some groups, the broader organizational culture is characterized by fragmentation, tension, and reduced interpersonal warmth. These conditions materially affect morale, operational cohesion, and employees' sense of belonging within the Department.

## SECTION NO. 14: TRUST

Interviews with employees revealed the concern that trust in leadership has significantly declined because of interactions and decisions that employees perceive as inconsistent, dismissive, or lacking transparency. There is a widespread belief that employees cannot reliably predict how leadership will respond to concerns, mistakes, or routine operational issues. Officers and supervisors stated that decisions sometimes

appear abrupt, emotional, or disproportionate to the circumstances, contributing to uncertainty about expectations. This unpredictability has, in employees' views, made it difficult to trust that actions will be evaluated fairly or consistently.

Employees also expressed diminished trust in the fairness of administrative processes. Concerns about inconsistent discipline, perceived retaliation, and removal from specialty assignments were frequently cited as experiences that undermined confidence in leadership decision-making. Many officers stated that they no longer believe decisions are based primarily on objective standards of performance or merit. Instead, they perceive decisions as influenced by subjective factors or personal dynamics, which they view as incompatible with fair leadership.

Another significant contributor to the erosion of trust is the perceived lack of transparent communication surrounding key decisions. Employees reported that changes in direction, policy adjustments, or personnel decisions often occur without explanation or context. While employees acknowledged that confidentiality requirements limit the information that can be shared regarding certain matters, they emphasized that even general explanations or broader communication about organizational priorities would improve trust. The absence of such communication contributes to speculation and misunderstanding.

Supervisors noted that trust in leadership is further undermined when the chain of command is bypassed. They described situations in which their decisions or directives were overridden directly by the Chief without discussion. These incidents not only affected supervisors' trust in their own ability to manage their teams but also

diminished their confidence that leadership would support them in carrying out their responsibilities. This dynamic contributes to an overall sense that supervisory authority is conditional or precarious, which undermines organizational coherence.

Employees also described a broader loss of trust in the Department's direction and stability. Several officers expressed concern that the Department has lost focus, citing the elimination of specialty units, reduced training, and changes in policing philosophy as indicators of a shifting or unclear strategy. They noted that without a shared understanding of long-term goals or operational priorities, trust in leadership's vision is difficult to maintain. This uncertainty affects not only morale but also employees' commitment to the Department's future.

Civilian staff also reported trust-related concerns, though generally in milder terms than sworn employees. They noted that communication gaps, rapid changes, and inconsistent expectations contribute to confusion and reduce confidence in administrative leadership. However, many civilian employees emphasized that trust between co-workers within their own units remains strong, even as trust in the Department's overall direction has weakened.

Perhaps most notably, trust deficits were described not only in terms of leadership but also in terms of peer relationships. As discussed earlier, employees reported that the overall climate of apprehension has created an environment where individuals are cautious about confiding in colleagues or raising concerns through formal channels. This reluctance reflects diminished trust that information shared in confidence will be handled appropriately or without negative consequences.

Despite these concerns, many employees expressed a desire to rebuild trust and reestablish a sense of stability within the Department. They noted that trust is repairable but requires consistent communication, fairness in decision-making, and meaningful engagement with staff at all levels. Employees emphasized that trust cannot be restored through isolated statements or initiatives, but rather through sustained actions that demonstrate reliability, transparency, and respect.

In summary, trust within the Department has significantly eroded, affecting employees' confidence in leadership, the chain of command, decision-making processes, and the broader organizational direction. This erosion affects morale, communication, collaboration, and officer well-being, and is a central theme in the Department's current challenges.

## SECTION NO. 15: OFFICER SUPPORT

Concerns about officer support were consistently raised across nearly all interviews, with employees describing a significant decline in the level of professional and personal support they feel from Department leadership. Officers stated that the organizational environment under the current administration feels less supportive, less appreciative, and more punitive. This perception has substantially affected morale, confidence, and employees' overall connection to the Department.

Many officers expressed that they do not feel valued or supported in the performance of their duties. Employees reported that accomplishments, strong performance, and initiative receive little acknowledgment, while mistakes, sometimes minor or administrative in nature, are scrutinized or documented. Officers described

feeling that their contributions are overlooked and that the Department focuses more on compliance or correction than on encouragement or recognition of efforts. This emphasis on fault-finding, combined with limited positive reinforcement, was described as discouraging and demoralizing.

Employees also reported that when they expressed concerns about workload, training needs, equipment issues, or operational safety, they often felt dismissed. Several officers recounted incidents in which they attempted to explain how certain decisions were affecting officer safety such as the reduction in scenario-based training or the need for adequate staffing but stated that their concerns were minimized or rejected outright. These interactions contributed to a perception that leadership is not receptive to front-line input, even when offered in good faith or grounded in operational necessity.

Officers stated they worry that leadership may not support their decision-making during tense or rapidly evolving circumstances, and that they may face excessive scrutiny or disciplinary action after the fact. This worry was described as adding stress to already challenging calls and potentially causing hesitation in high-risk situations.

Supervisors emphasized that officer support is essential for effective performance and morale, and they expressed concern that their ability to support their teams has been undermined by changes in leadership approach. Supervisors stated that when their own decisions are overridden or dismissed, it becomes difficult to advocate for the needs of their officers. They also noted that officers increasingly bring

concerns to them privately rather than through official channels due to fear of negative consequences, limiting supervisors' ability to address issues directly and transparently.

Employees also discussed the emotional and psychological dimension of support. Officers expressed a desire for leadership to show understanding of the stresses inherent in policing, particularly during a time of staffing shortages and increased call loads. Several officers noted that they feel leadership is unaware of or unresponsive to the emotional toll placed on employees by the current work environment. Some described previous administrations as more attuned to officer well-being, routinely checking in with staff, acknowledging difficult calls, or expressing appreciation for hard work. In contrast, employees stated that such gestures are less frequent or absent under the current administration.

Civilian employees also commented on support dynamics, though generally to a lesser degree than sworn staff. Members of administrative units reported feeling that while they support sworn staff as best they can, their own workloads have increased due to documentation requirements or procedural changes without corresponding increases in resources or communication. Some civilian employees expressed that they too feel overlooked or taken for granted, even as they shoulder essential administrative responsibilities.

Another important theme was the perception that leadership does not advocate for officers in external contexts, such as interactions with other city departments, community stakeholders, or regional partners. Several officers expressed concern that when external criticism arises, whether in the media, public forums, or interagency

settings such as the CRB or otherwise, leadership appears reluctant to defend officers or provide balanced context. Officers noted that feeling supported publicly by their leadership is a key component of job satisfaction and organizational loyalty and expressed concern that this has diminished.

In summary, employees across the Department reported a decline in the level of professional and personal support they feel from leadership. These concerns encompass recognition, responsiveness to operational needs, emotional understanding, advocacy, and fair consideration of officer decision-making. The cumulative effect is a perception that the Department is less supportive, less appreciative, and more critical than in prior years, contributing significantly to morale challenges and organizational strain.

## SECTION NO. 16: LEADERSHIP

Leadership concerns represent one of the most significant and unifying themes described across all interviews. While the specific issues varied among employees, the overarching perception is that leadership under the current administration has struggled to establish trust, provide stability, communicate effectively, or build a collaborative and supportive organizational culture. These concerns have contributed directly to declines in morale, increased turnover intentions, and diminished confidence in the Department's future.

Many employees stated that the Chief's leadership style feels unpredictable and, at times, emotionally charged. Officers and supervisors reported that interactions with the Chief can shift rapidly in tone, with employees describing abrupt mood changes,

raised voices, or emotional responses when questions or concerns are raised. These patterns have contributed to a sense of caution among staff, who expressed that they must carefully monitor their words and actions to avoid triggering a negative reaction. This anxiety was described as pervasive, shaping daily interactions and contributing significantly to workplace stress.

Employees also cited concerns about inconsistency in leadership decisions. They reported that policies, expectations, and operational directives often change abruptly, without explanation or clear rationale. Supervisors described difficulty implementing Department priorities when they themselves were not provided with sufficient context or were unaware of changes until after they were communicated to line-level officers. This lack of consistency has created confusion and reduced confidence that decisions are grounded in a coherent strategy.

A major theme was the perception that the Chief's leadership does not follow the traditional chain of command. Employees stated that the Chief routinely bypasses supervisors to issue instructions directly to officers, intervene in operational details, or modify supervisory decisions. Supervisors reported feeling undermined, while officers described feeling caught between competing instructions. This dynamic was described as a central factor in the erosion of supervisory authority and organizational clarity.

Communication concerns were also closely tied to leadership issues. Employees expressed that the Chief's communication style often feels directive rather than collaborative, and dismissive rather than open. Officers reported that when they attempt to raise concerns they often feel shut down or criticized. Supervisors described

meetings in which alternative viewpoints were not only rejected but met with hostility, discouraging further input. This pattern has significantly limited upward communication and contributed to a culture of fear and silence.

Another frequently discussed concern involved the Chief's limited engagement with staff outside of formal or disciplinary contexts. Employees stated that the Chief is often physically or socially removed from daily operations, and they rarely observe positive, relationship-building interactions. Several officers noted that the Chief's presence during patrol briefings or field operations is minimal, and that her touchpoints with employees tend to occur during moments of correction or accountability rather than support or recognition. Employees emphasized that this dynamic contributes to a perception that leadership is distant, unapproachable, or unaware of the realities faced by front-line staff.

Concerns about leadership were not limited to interpersonal dynamics. Employees also expressed uncertainty about the Department's strategic direction. Many noted that they do not understand the long-term plan for policing philosophy, specialty assignments, training priorities, or staffing models. The transition toward a more community-oriented model, combined with changes to enforcement practices and the elimination of specialty units, was described as lacking a cohesive explanation. Employees stated that without a clear vision, it is difficult for them to align their work or understand leadership priorities.

Employees also expressed concern about the Chief's credibility based on repeated statements that later appear contradicted by outcomes. Officers cited

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instances in which explanations provided for decisions such as reasons for disciplinary action, reassignment, or changes to training were inconsistent with their observations or with information that later became known. This perceived inconsistency contributed to a sense that leadership is not always transparent or forthright, further eroding trust.

Supervisors additionally expressed frustration with what they described as a punitive or fault-finding leadership approach. They emphasized that effective police leadership requires balance, holding employees accountable while also developing, guiding, and supporting them. Many supervisors stated they struggle to strike this balance because actions they were traditionally responsible for have been centralized or overridden. They reported that decision-making is frequently top-down, reactive, and lacking in collaborative input.

Despite widespread concerns, employees consistently expressed a desire for strong, stable, and collaborative leadership. Many stated that they want to support the Department and the Chief but feel unable to do so because existing patterns of communication, decision-making, and interaction have created barriers to trust and cooperation. Employees emphasized that leadership plays a critical role in shaping culture, and that the Department's challenges cannot be resolved without meaningful change in leadership approach.

In summary, employees across the Department described significant concerns regarding leadership style, consistency, communication, strategic clarity, and adherence to chain-of-command principles. These issues have deeply affected morale, trust, collaboration, and officer well-being. As expressed by employees, leadership-related

concerns are among the most impactful contributors to the Department's current organizational climate.

<p align="center">**POSITIVES IDENTIFIED BY EMPLOYEES IN INTERVIEWS**</p>

**POINT 1: IMPRESSIONS OF CO-WORKERS**

Many employees described strong team-level dynamics. They believe their immediate coworkers and direct supervisors are supportive, competent, and committed to doing quality work. Several officers spoke highly of their sergeants and their ability to balance operational needs with support for their teams. Employees frequently stated they love their team. These comments underscore a belief that despite organizational stress, many units remain professionally solid and internally cohesive.

**POINT 2: ATTRIBUTES OF THE CHIEF**

Several employees described positive personal interactions with the Chief. Some employees characterized the Chief as kind, polite, open-minded, communicative, and direct. Others described the Chief as intelligent, hardworking, and mission-driven, recognizing she has  strong administrative skill sets and approaches problems thoughtfully. Some employees specifically noted that her goals of accountability, structure, and improvement reflect genuine efforts to modernize the organization.

A notable set of employees expressed appreciation for the opportunities the Chief provided, especially in the context of hiring and second chances. Some officers stated they were grateful that she gave them an opportunity to join or remain with the Department when other agencies might not have done so.

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## POINT 3: ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES

Some employees framed the Chief's emphasis on accountability positively, acknowledging that the Department needed higher standards or more consistent expectations. A few officers indicated that they thought the Chief's desire to implement documentation was important and needed. Some recognized that the Chief inherited preexisting deficiencies, and that her efforts to remedy those were upsetting to some.

## POINT 4: TRAINING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND OPPORTUNITIES

Several officers noted that the Chief was supportive of outside trainings and continuing education opportunities when staffing allowed. Some described her as willing to approve professional development requests, including advanced courses or specialized instruction, and they appreciated this support. Others appreciated the frequency of training provided.

## POINT 5: RECOGNITION, WELLNESS, AND SUPPORT

Some employees reported that the Chief made efforts to connect personally with staff through check-ins and conversations and viewed these gestures as sincere attempts to understand employee concerns. A few employees highlighted that the Chief made efforts to publicly recognize good work and accomplishments.

## POINT 6: COMMUNICATION EFFORTS

Some employees described the Chief as generally accessible or communicative in specific contexts. An example was roundtable meetings with members from all divisions to discuss goals, priorities, and the department's mission statement.

## POINT 7: ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTION

A small number of employees stated they appreciated the Chief's intention to improve accountability. They noted that improving documentation and addressing performance deficiencies were needed.

## POINT 8: COMMITMENT TO JOB, SERVICE, AND PROFESSIONALISM

Across interviews, regardless of views about leadership, many employees expressed respect for their colleagues, pride in their work, and a strong belief in the mission of the Department. Employees consistently praised the Department's patrol officers, describing them as hardworking, community-oriented, and committed to keeping the City's citizens safe. These positive comments highlight the resilience and dedication that continue to exist within the organization.

## CHIEF CROYLE'S INTERVIEW

## POINT 1: EXPECTATIONS

When she was appointed as the Chief, the City made clear it sought a leader to take the Department in a different direction. Part of that was to eliminate institutional favoritism that existed within certain groups in the Department. It was also to shift to a community-oriented policing model. She believes the City's intent in selecting her rather than promoting someone from a long-standing internal network was to correct systemic deficiencies, address entrenched patterns of informal decision-making, and align the Department with contemporary law-enforcement practices.

## POINT 2: DEPARTMENT CULTURE AND MORALE

The Chief described her early impression of the Department as one characterized by cultural divisions and a fractured identity, including prior internal affairs investigations, allegations of favoritism, and leadership conflicts. According to the Chief, some officers had been disciplined or reprimanded under past administrations, leaving lingering resentment that later influenced their perception of new accountability measures. She believes these long-standing tensions created interpersonal dynamics that predated her arrival but shaped the reception of her leadership. These, she feels, left some employees feeling resentful or disillusioned.

Those issues were compounded when she became Chief. There was a group of officers who not only expressed disappointment about her appointment but actively resisted her efforts. They were influential, and the Chief believes they have negatively influenced other officers' perceptions of her.

Overall, the Chief saw morale as weakened before her appointment, and she believes the Department contains groups that were resistant to structural expectations and align more closely with informal norms than with formal supervisory requirements.

## POINT 3: EARLY EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To understand employee concerns more fully, the Chief described holding listening sessions shortly after assuming command. She stated these meetings consistently revealed employee frustration surrounding three overarching themes: accountability, communication, and wellness. She made these issues a focus of her initial efforts toward change.

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A. <u>Accountability Concerns</u>

Employees reported long-standing deficiencies in supervision and consistency across shifts. The Chief noted expectations varied dramatically depending on which sergeant or lieutenant was on duty. She repeatedly heard concerns about lack of discipline, inconsistent standards, inadequate oversight, and a culture where some employees felt they could disregard expectations without consequence. She cited issues such as inconsistent equipment checks, relaxed report-writing standards, poorly monitored vehicle maintenance, and wide variation in enforcement practices. Some employees described a sense that expectations were unclear or unevenly enforced, leading to frustration across the ranks. She implemented measures to improve accountability, such as addressing vehicle maintenance and report quality, but these changes have met resistance and are perceived by some as punitive.

B. <u>Communication Deficiencies</u>

The Chief reported that communication among leadership, supervisors, and line staff was fragmented. Information often reached officers in incomplete or contradictory forms. She responded by implementing updates after city meetings, law-enforcement consortiums, and leadership briefings. She also circulated minutes from command staff meetings to ensure consistency in information flow.

C. <u>Wellness Needs</u>

Wellness emerged as a central concern. Employees described burnout, stress, emotional fatigue, and limited access to mental-health support. The Chief responded by expanding access to counseling services, securing grants for wellness initiatives, and

allowing officers to attend counseling sessions on duty without supervisory permission.

She emphasized that she considered wellness a critical Department priority.

## POINT 4: ADMINISTRATIVE DEMANDS AND EXTERNAL AUDITS

The Chief stated that her first year in the role involved extensive administrative

demands due to a series of mandatory external audits. These included an FBI audit, a

UCJIS (Utah Criminal Justice Information System) audit, a state juvenile-holding facility

audit, a state-mandated policy and procedure review, and additional inspections tied to

accreditation and compliance. These audits uncovered deficiencies requiring correction.

Those deficiencies included outdated procedures, incomplete documentation,

inconsistent adherence to detention standards, and gaps in data-management

practices.

The Chief viewed the audit findings as serious and requiring prompt attention to

ensure proper administrative oversight and consistent supervisory enforcement. These

administrative corrections and structural reforms consumed significant time and

resources. She stated she prioritized compliance, which limited her ability to engage

more frequently in interpersonal, relational, or morale-building activities early in her

tenure.

## POINT 5: SUPERVISORY PERFORMANCE AND RESISTANCE

The Chief identified supervisory inconsistency as one of the most significant

obstacles to organizational stability. She reported that some supervisors resisted

implementing her directives, failed to correct problematic behavior, or selectively

communicated information.

She described encountering situations where supervisors did not share information from leadership meetings, bragged about automatically deleting emails containing directives, tolerated or participated in negative discussions within briefing rooms, failed to intervene when employees exhibited disrespectful behavior, and did not address insubordination or morale-undermining statements. The Chief stated that such supervisory resistance undermined her efforts to establish consistent expectations. She believed that several supervisors aligned themselves with employee factions resistant to heightened accountability, further complicating her efforts to elevate the Department.

According to the Chief, some supervisors' reluctance to enforce expectations stemmed from a desire to maintain popularity or avoid conflict. She believes this reluctance perpetuated inconsistent practices and left employees unclear on expectations.

She acknowledged that she initially selected some supervisors from an existing promotional list who later became critics of her leadership. She stated that these individuals appeared to resist structural reforms, participated in negative messaging, or communicated in ways that fueled division. She believed that supervisory resistance was a central driver of the morale deterioration expressed by employees.

She also explained that she does not bypass her chain of command. She delegates to her supervisors, but they do not follow through, forcing her to intervene to ensure information is properly communicated and the work is properly done.

## POINT 6: COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AND INTERNAL INFORMATION FLOW

The Chief stated that communication deficiencies within the Department were long-standing and were a central factor in misunderstanding, rumor circulation, and organizational tension. She described implementing multiple strategies to increase transparency and consistency, but she believed these efforts were undermined when supervisors selectively relayed information or failed to provide proper context.

She reported attending multiple briefings across shifts to provide direct updates, clarify expectations, and reduce reliance on informal information channels. She distributed summaries of leadership meetings, consortium updates, and policy changes. However, she indicated that some employees relied on word-of-mouth interpretations instead of direct communication, contributing to cycles of misinformation.

The Chief stated that only a small number of officers approached her directly to discuss concerns. She believed that this limited direct communication allowed inaccurate information to spread without challenge. She also described instances in which officers stated that they did not know about decisions or directives that she had communicated through multiple formal channels, which she interpreted as evidence of inconsistent internal message flow rather than lack of communication at the leadership level.

## POINT 7: WELLNESS INITIATIVES AND EMPLOYEE SUPPORT EFFORTS

The Chief described multiple wellness initiatives that she implemented in response to employee concerns and City administration expectations. These initiatives included expanding access to counseling services, securing grant funding to support

wellness programming, contracting with external providers to offer mental health

support, and authorizing on-duty counseling sessions without requiring prior supervisory

approval.

She stated that these measures reflected her commitment to addressing officer

stress, burnout, and emotional fatigue. The Chief reported engaging with City leadership

to align Department al wellness efforts with broader municipal priorities and described

wellness as a central employee need identified during listening sessions.

She also described making efforts to publicly recognize officers for positive

performance, commendation-worthy actions, or contributions to organizational

improvement. She reported attempting to highlight exemplary work during staff

meetings or through Department-wide communication, believing recognition was an

important component of morale and support.

## POINT 8: Significant Disciplinary Cases and Their Effect on Organizational Morale

The Chief described two disciplinary cases she believed had significant impacts

on employee morale, due largely to the popularity of the officers involved and the

confidentiality restrictions that prevented her from explaining the underlying

circumstances in detail. She stated disciplinary actions were taken with these

employees based on legal guidance and professional standards. However, because she

could not disclose confidential information, employees developed their own

interpretations of the decisions. She believed that misinformation spread quickly and

contributed to negative narratives about her leadership. She further stated that

supervisors who were aware of the seriousness of the situations did not provide context

to subordinates and, in some cases, appeared to reinforce negative interpretations. The

Chief believed that these circumstances significantly contributed to the negative morale

trends identified during the assessment.

**POINT 9: Training System, Cultural Identity, Deficiencies, and Reform Efforts**

The Chief provided a detailed description of what she viewed as deficiencies in

the Department's training system. She stated that historically, training had been

controlled by a small group of tactical-focused instructors who held significant influence

over Departmental identity. According to her, this system emphasized tactical skills with

less emphasis on other critical competencies, such as communication and de-

escalation, legal standards, decision-making processes, report writing, practical

scenario-based application of law, use-of-force balancing, documentation, and liability

mitigation. She stated that this training culture contributed to a Department identity

centered on tactical capability rather than broader competencies required by

contemporary policing standards.

The Chief reported she observed issues during scenario-based evaluations

related to commands during detentions, arrest control, communication, de-escalation,

legal standards applied in dynamic situations, and documentation. She also stated that

handling of civilian property during training revealed outdated practices. The lack of

formal evaluations and inconsistent documentation have fueled rumors and anxiety

about discipline and personnel decisions.

As part of her reform efforts, the Chief sought to modernize training by

introducing more classroom-based instruction, emphasizing legal standards, and

reducing reliance on extended tactical exercises. She has also sought to balance state

requirements, officer preferences, and best practices, maintaining higher-than-required

training hours but resisting demands for extensive firearms and arrest control sessions.

She has further begun to implement employment reviews and developmental check-ins

and evaluations. She acknowledges the rollout of such could have been improved.

These reforms were met with resistance from employees who favored the previous

structure.

She described several incidents in which officers behaved disrespectfully during

mandatory training sessions delivered by external presenters, including an episode

during a city attorney's presentation where a sergeant displayed what she interpreted as

open contempt. She believed such incidents demonstrated the depth of resistance to

training reform and the cultural challenges associated with changing long-standing

Department norms.

The Chief also described a situation in which ICE agents conducted training at

the Department without her approval. She stated that this unauthorized activity violated

City expectations and presented political and legal risks. She viewed this event as an

example of supervisory disregard for proper oversight.

**POINT 10: OPERATIONAL CONCERNS, LIABILITY ISSUES, AND POLICY ADHERENCE**

The Chief stated she identified multiple operational deficiencies that needed

adjustment. These included the application of juvenile detention procedures, holding-

facility regulations, use-of-force practices, review and scrutiny of use-of-force reports,

foundational knowledge of case law, report writing, documentation, consistent

application of certain protocols, and supervisory oversight over operational tasks.

Changes to the vehicle pursuit policy, aligning with state law and risk management best

practices, have been unpopular among officers who favor more assertive tactics.

She believes these deficiencies reinforced the need for structural reform and

modernized accountability practices. She stated these issues were identified through

internal reviews, assessment of training scenarios, and external audits.

She emphasized that supervisory inconsistency played a major role in

operational gaps, with some supervisors failing to enforce expectations or to monitor

compliance with essential procedures. She believes that failure to correct these

deficiencies created potential issues for the City and undermined the professional

integrity of the Department.

## POINT 11: Organizational Structure, Staffing, and Specialty Assignments

The Chief stated that staffing challenges influenced both morale and operational

capacity. She described persistent issues with limited personnel availability that

restricted training opportunities, reduced flexibility in shift assignments, and created

strain on specialty units.

She reported the Department had numerous employees interested in specialty

assignments, but limited positions were available. This mismatch between demand and

opportunity generated frustration and, in her view, contributed to perceptions of

unfairness or favoritism.

She also described concerns regarding the readiness and experience levels of

newer officers, noting generational differences in communication styles, technology use,

and expectation of supervisory guidance. She believed these differences increased the

need for foundational training reforms and clearer supervisory direction.

The Chief acknowledged the department faces attrition with experienced officers

considering departure due to dissatisfaction with leadership and cultural shifts. She

views some turnover as potentially necessary for progress, emphasizing the need for

alignment with the department's evolving mission and community expectations.

**POINT 12: CULTURAL DYNAMICS, DEPARTMENT IDENTITY, AND
GENERATIONAL TENSION**

The Chief described the Department's internal culture as defined by distinct

factions whose expectations and preferred practices differed markedly. She stated a

group of long-tenured officers identified strongly with the Department's prior structure,

particularly with training practices emphasizing tactical identity and less structured

administrative oversight. According to the Chief, this faction resisted changes intended

to modernize the organization and viewed reform efforts as an erosion of established

norms.

She explained that the historical training group, comprised of a small number of

instructors who had long influenced the Department's tactical-oriented culture, held

significant internal authority and shaped expectations for operational identity. She

believes this contributed to a Department al mindset that undervalued documentation,

articulation, and procedural consistency. In her assessment, the emphasis on tactical

identity created resistance when training reforms introduced alternative focuses such as

communication, legal articulation, and scenario-based reasoning.

The Chief also described generational differences affecting the Department's cohesion. She reported that newer officers tended to rely more on technology, preferred detailed supervisory guidance, and demonstrated less comfort engaging assertively with the public without explicit direction. She believes these officers required structured training to build foundational decision-making skills. By contrast, some long-tenured officers favored informal learning methods and preferred autonomy over structured processes. This generational divergence, in her view, intensified disagreement regarding training expectations, supervision, and accountability.

She also stated that long-standing interpersonal relationships shaped cultural alliances within the agency. Officers who had worked together for many years were closely aligned, and changes affecting individuals within that group often generated broader resistance. She believed that negative reactions to accountability measures were amplified by the cohesion within these interpersonal networks.

## POINT 13: RUMOR DYNAMICS AND INFORMAL INFORMATION CHANNELS

The Chief identified rumor circulation as a significant factor in morale deterioration. She stated that information often spread informally in ways that distorted or misrepresented decisions, especially those related to discipline or personnel management. She described a persistent pattern in which employees relied on secondhand accounts, assumptions, or partial information rather than seeking clarification through formal channels.

She gave examples of employees expressing surprise at decisions or directives that she stated had been communicated publicly and repeatedly. She believes that

informal channels, including discussions within briefing rooms, text groups, and

interpersonal networks, were more influential to some officers than direct

communication from leadership.

According to the Chief, some supervisors contributed to this dynamic by failing to

correct misinformation or by participating in discussions that framed leadership

decisions negatively. She believed that these behaviors contributed to mistrust,

reinforced factional divisions, and diminished the effectiveness of formal communication

efforts.

The Chief also described her perception that some employees avoided direct

dialogue with her even when decisions affected them personally. She believes this

avoidance reflected either reluctance to be associated with leadership or skepticism that

concerns would be addressed, both of which she viewed as exacerbated by cultural

tensions rather than evidence of unapproachability. She believes the spread of rumors

and gossip is a significant factor undermining morale.

## POINT 14: UNION DYNAMICS AND THE ROLE OF THE FOP

The Chief provided an extended description of her interactions with the FOP. She

stated that she experienced limited engagement from the FOP prior to its decision to

conduct a Department-wide morale survey. According to the Chief, the FOP board did

not collaborate with her on survey design, nor did it initiate discussions about concerns

identified in its findings before presenting them to the Mayor.

She viewed the FOP's actions, specifically the recommendation that the Mayor

remove her from her position, as indicative of a breakdown in collaborative leadership.

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She believed that the FOP's decision to bypass dialogue with her and instead escalate

concerns directly to city leadership contributed to polarization within the Department.

The Chief stated that she had attempted to engage in regular dialogue with the

FOP but received limited participation. She believed the FOP's public posture

influenced employee perceptions and contributed to resistance toward leadership

initiatives. She also believed that the FOP board was closely aligned with individuals

who opposed her appointment or disagreed with her accountability expectations.

She viewed the FOP as a significant cultural force within the Department stating

that union influence shaped employee sentiment more strongly than direct

communication from leadership. She believes that the FOP's choices, combined with

broader cultural tensions, has contributed meaningfully to the overall morale climate.

**POINT 15: Leadership Expectations, Accountability Mandates, and Role Interpretation**

The Chief stated her leadership actions were made with input from the Mayor

and City administration. She emphasized she was hired to address accountability

concerns, correct systemic deficiencies, modernize training, strengthen supervisory

consistency, and align Department operations with City values.

She expressed the view that some employee concerns were rooted in resistance

to the accountability expectations that accompanied her mandate. She believes her

decisions, while perceived as disruptive by some employees, were consistent with

professional standards and expectations for modern law-enforcement agencies.

The Chief described the difficulty of implementing structural reform in an

environment where organizational norms had previously tolerated inconsistent

performance, relaxed documentation practices, and varying supervisory standards. She

believed that employees accustomed to greater autonomy, less documentation, and

informal supervisory practices saw her changes as abrupt and unwelcome.

She stated that her leadership approach emphasizes direct communication, clear

expectations, and process adherence. She acknowledged that her communication style

is direct and that she approaches problems with urgency. However, she denied raising

her voice inappropriately or behaving in a manner inconsistent with professional

standards.

## EMPLOYEES' POSITIONS ON LEADERSHIP

All 88 employees were questioned about what they thought needed to occur to

change poor morale in the Department. Responses reflected a range of perspectives

but were weighted heavily toward concern about the Department's current trajectory.

Thirty-seven employees (four civilians) stated they believed replacing the Chief was the

only viable way to address the issues facing the Department. An additional fourteen

employees (three civilians) indicated that while they did not view replacement as the

sole option, they had serious concerns about the consequences of the Chief remaining

in place. Fifteen employees (three civilians) expressed no opinion on the question. Of

those fifteen, approximately two-thirds had been with the Department for one year or

less. Twenty-two employees (five civilians) stated that they did not believe replacement

was necessary.

Tenure appears to play a significant role in shaping employee perspectives.

Employees who viewed replacement as needed or advisable had an average of

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approximately 9.5 years of experience with a median of 8 years. In contrast, employees

who did not view replacement as necessary had an average of just over 5 years of

experience with a median of 2 years. This indicates that employees with longer tenure,

particularly those who have experienced multiple leadership styles and organizational

cycles, were more likely to view leadership change as necessary, while employees with

shorter tenure tended to have more neutral or positive views.

Approximately 25–30% of employees reported either personally experiencing or

directly witnessing a negative interaction involving the Chief. These employees

described their concerns as grounded in firsthand observation. The remaining

employees acknowledged that their views of the Chief were shaped primarily by what

they heard from others rather than through direct interactions. Many noted that although

they personally had not experienced negative conduct, the consistency of reports from

colleagues strongly influenced their perceptions of leadership.

Similarly, in discussing personal experience, employees frequently stated that

their concerns or negative views were not the result of direct encounters but rather

based on the widespread reports circulating within the Department. Many

acknowledged that they had not had significant personal interactions with the Chief but

nevertheless held negative views due to the repeated accounts shared among peers.

## CONCLUSION

The information collected during this investigation reflects a Department

experiencing deep organizational strain, marked by low morale, erosion of trust,

concerns regarding communication and leadership consistency, and substantial

disagreement about the direction and stability of the Department. Employees described a work environment characterized by tension, diminished camaraderie, and uncertainty, expressing concerns across sixteen substantive themes. The Chief attributed much of this reaction to systemic communication failures, resistance to increased accountability, and longstanding cultural patterns that favored informal processes and internal traditions over structured policy adherence. The conflicting perspectives reflect an environment in which organizational conditions, historical tensions, communication gaps, and differing expectations of leadership have resulted in significant turbulence. Employees perceive the Chief's leadership style and decisions as destabilizing and, in some cases, harmful to the Department's culture and operations. The Chief views the Department's resistance, communication failures, and entrenched practices as major barriers to the change she believes is necessary and explicitly expected by the City.

Across the Department, morale remains low, and concerns have been amplified by the polarization between employees' experiences and the Chief's interpretation of her role and responsibilities. Many employees expressed uncertainty about the Department's trajectory, while the Chief describes being committed to reform but hindered by historical dysfunction and resistance to change. These two narratives— each internally cohesive but fundamentally divergent—underscore a profound disconnect between leadership and staff.
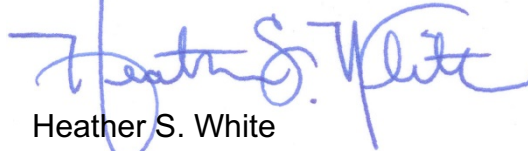
In sum, the evidence demonstrates that the Department is facing significant structural, cultural, and relational challenges that cannot be attributed solely to individual perspectives. The combination of employee concerns and the Chief's reform efforts

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have collectively produced an environment of instability and declining confidence

resulting in an historically low level of morale within the Department.

Very truly yours,

Heather S. White
For the Firm

HSW/