

Quartzsite Police Officers Association

P.O. Box 1959

Quartzsite, Arizona 85346

President: William Ponce
Vice President: Heriberto Dominguez
Secretary: Michelle Norris
Treasurer: Linda Conley

May 10, 2011

To Whom It May Concern

On May 10, 2011 a letter was completed by the majority of the Quartzsite Police Department Officers and members of the Quartzsite Police Officers Association. The Officers involved in the complaint are listed below. The letter was hand delivered to AZPOST May 11, 2011, **requesting an investigation of misconduct** by Police Chief Jeff Gilbert.

Quartzsite Police Officers Association

Stephen Frakes *Stephen Frakes*

James C. Kemp *James C. Kemp*

Filipe Rodriguez *Filipe Rodriguez*

Ruben Villanara *Ruben Villanara*

Alejandro Ruvalcaba *Alejandro Ruvalcaba*

Herlan Yeomans *Herlan Yeomans*

William Ponce *William Ponce*

Heriberto Dominguez *Heriberto Dominguez*

Michelle Norris *Michelle Norris*

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Filipe Rodriguez	<i>Filipe Rodriguez</i>	Ruben Villanara	<i>Ruben Villanara</i>
Alejandro Ruvalcaba	<i>Alejandro Ruvalcaba</i>	Herlan Yeomans	<i>Herlan Yeomans</i>
William Ponce	<i>William Ponce</i>	Heriberto Dominguez	<i>Heriberto Dominguez</i> 034
Michelle Norris	<i>Michelle Norris</i>	Linda Conley	<i>Linda Conley</i>

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Town Manager Alex Taft,

I am writing this letter to inform you that the following members have contacted me requesting an AZCOPS representative present during their interviews:

Alex Ruvalcaba	James Kemp
Linda Conley	Stephen Frakes
Michelle Norris	William Ponce
Herlen Yeomans	Heriberto Dominguez
Ruben Villafana	Felipe Rodriguez

Per ARS 38-1101, we are entitled to have a representative present during any interviews, and we wish to invoke this right under Arizona Law. I am the president of our AZCOPS chapter, and the designated representative for the Quartzsite Police Officers Association members. I will only be available for interviews on Friday June 3rd. Please schedule interviews for the above members for that date.

Respectfully Submitted,



William A. Ponce

Quartzsite Police Officers Association

Cc: Mayor & Council Members

05-26-11

To: Mayor, Members of Town Council, Town Manager

From: Members of the Quartzsite Police Department

In the past few weeks, members of the Quartzsite Police Department, representing approximately 80% of the department, have made it known to members of the Town Council and other agencies our concerns involving conduct of the Chief of Police, Jeff Gilbert.

We have advised you not of only policy violations, but criminal violations against citizens as well. We have notified you that we have a vote of "No Confidence" in his leadership.

We have notified AZCOPS, who have requested of AZPOST an immediate investigation of Chief Gilbert. AZCOPS has submitted a public records request from the Quartzsite Police Department and Town Hall.

During this time, we have since come to the realization that the Quartzsite Town Manager, Alex Taft, has continually attempted to delay, stall or prevent this investigation from taking place. We also have knowledge that she appears to be aiding Chief Gilbert in trying to initiate the investigation using his own known associates at other agencies. We believe her personal friendship with the Chief had blinded her to her responsibilities to the citizens of this community, keeping her from doing her duty to the Town of Quartzsite, and to the employees under Chief Gilbert's direct supervision.

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

Left with little other choice, we have prepared the following press release to be submitted to the media within 24 hours after delivery of this letter, along with a copy of the press release, to those who are listed above. We feel it is our duty to inform the citizens of this community and the rest of the public, that we do not stand behind Chief Gilbert, or condone any of his criminal actions, nor will we jeopardize our own careers by following orders we know are unconstitutional, or by not reporting his criminal behavior.

As it is apparent to us that a vote of No Confidence in Chief Gilbert is not enough to ask for his resignation with cause, we feel that notifying your constituents of the kind of man and Officer that is being allowed to run the Quartzsite Police Department is the only avenue left to convince you to start an honest investigation into a serious matter.

Signed,

Alex Ruvalcaba

James C. Kemp

Linda Conley

Stephen Frakes

Michelle Norris

Will Ponce

Herlen Yeomans

Heriberto Dominguez

Ruben Villafana

Filipe Rodriguez

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:****Quartzsite Police Officers Vote No Confidence in Chief of Police**

Quartzsite, Arizona – May 26, 2011 - Members of the Quartzsite Police Officers Association, representing 80% of the Quartzsite Police Department, would like to make the following announcement.

We have notified the Mayor, members of the Quartzsite Town Council and AZPOST of town policy and criminal violations by Quartzsite Police Chief Jeff Gilbert. We have expressed a vote of "No Confidence" in his leadership, and have requested his resignation.

Quartzsite Town Manager, Alex Taft, instead of doing her duty to the citizens of Quartzsite to start an immediate investigation through AZPOST and the Department of Public Safety, has set up condition after condition to be met in an apparent effort to stall, delay or prevent an honest investigation from occurring.

The Quartzsite Town Council as a whole appears to be either powerless or unwilling to compel Taft or Gilbert to comply with town policy and requests by Town Council members to initiate an investigation.

Members of the Quartzsite Police Department, in a show of unity and represented by AZCOPS, at the Town Meeting on June 14th, 2011, will give a public statement of "No Confidence" in Police Chief Jeff Gilbert and our reasons for the vote.

Will Ponce	Alex Ruvalcaba
James Kemp	Ruben Villafana
Heriberto Dominguez	Herlen Yeomans
Michelle Norris	Linda Conley
Stephen Frakes	Filipe Rodriguez

Contact:

Will Ponce

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We the majority of the employees of the Quartzsite Police Department, write this letter with great hesitation, and only after much discussion and contemplation. We hesitate because we consider ourselves a team of professional, dedicated and educated individuals and it goes against our nature to go against the Chief of Police. We also hesitate because we fully believe that if this letter does not have the desired result, and we continue to work under the current administration, there will most certainly be retaliation, as we have already experienced this in the past. We will ultimately pay a high price for doing what we know in our hearts is the right thing for the Town of Quartzsite, its citizens, and its employees.

For example, Chief Jeff Gilbert advised all the employees during a department meeting about an investigation that was conducted against him, by Arizona Department of Public Safety. The investigation involved interviews of certain employees. He told all employees present at the department meeting that day that he had obtained a copy of the entire report. He said he knew names of everyone, including employees that were involved or questions during the investigation. He made it clear by saying that there would be repercussions and consequences for those involved.

Over the past several years we have been disheartened by the actions of Chief Jeff Gilbert. He has tested our will power and our confidence in his skill to adequately lead this department. Under his leadership morale had plummeted to depths never before seen at this agency. Employees of other agencies, along with Chief Jeff Gilbert's direct subordinates, both past and present, have even commented about their lack of confidence in him as Police Chief. The issue of morale has been brought up by Chief Jeff Gilbert multiple times in the past several years. Employees have expressed their concerns to him time after time; still he has not taken any steps to improve the problems/issues within the department.

We all question the leadership qualities of Chief Jeff Gilbert. During his time as Police Chief we have seen numerous instances where he has had information brought to his attention regarding employee issues, yet he exhibits ignorance as his defense. This is a clear demonstration of his lack of interest in the day-to-day operations of this department, lack of communication skills necessary to ensure that information is being disseminated through subordinates, or more plainly, that he simply does not care about individuals under his command.

To illustrate this point with one example, there was recently some controversy regarding use of "sick time". In years past, officers/town employees were always allowed to use "sick time", if the employees had it, for the birth of a child by a spouse. As with all time off requests, time off is requested in writing and approved or denied by your immediate Sergeant. Two officers' spouses gave birth this past year. Both officers had enough saved up "sick time" and requested to use it for time off, for the birth and care of their spouse after the birth of their child. The use of "sick time" was approved by the Sergeant, by finance and signed and approved by the town manager. The officers took the time off and had already been paid for their time off out of their "sick time". A few weeks after the officers took the time off and had already been paid, finance advised one of the officers that he had accumulated too much vacation time and he needed to start using the time before he lost it. The officer requested a week off; Chief Jeff Gilbert questioned how it was possible for the officer to have so much time accumulated when he had



just got back from time off. When he was told the officers used "sick time" he told them "sick time" can't be used for the birth of your child. The situation was explained to Chief Gilbert and the fact that it had been approved by the Sergeant, finance and the town manager, He took the timesheets, put whiteout over the town manager's signature, He made the officers complete new time sheets and request "vacation" time. He had finance add the "sick time" used back to their accrued time and took their saved "vacation time" to pay them for the time off. Chief Jeff Gilbert has since put out a memo advising all officers that if they want to use "sick" time for attending a doctor visit they have to provide him with their doctor's name, length of time at the doctor office and the nature of their sickness. This is a violation of our privacy.

In addition to this, Chief Jeff Gilbert accuses "sick" and "vacation" time but when he chooses to take time off, which is a substantial amount of time, he doesn't report the time, He never uses any of his "sick" or "vacation" time. He doesn't even complete a time sheet, if he does complete one, it has only been recently.

Over the last two years the problems have continually got worse. Chief Jeff Gilbert is fixated on the politics in this town. He is personally involved in them and all his time and attention is directed towards political gain to benefit of himself. He is obviously biased towards certain council members and is against and outspoken to other candidate and council members. He runs license plates just to find out names of people whose vehicles are parked at businesses/residences of people he doesn't like. Not for an investigation, but to gain personal information about people for his political benefit. He runs criminal history reports through NCIC to try to find "dirt" on candidates or citizens supporting the candidates he does not like. Our policy clearly states that we are not to get involved in politics and must remain unbiased at all times. He orders officer to pull over and arrest/cite violations of citizens he feels are against him or he doesn't like. Not because they have committed a violation that he wants enforced equally, but because it is someone he doesn't like. Clearly this is a misuse of his power. He will target officers and go after them if he feels they are going against him. Candidates, supporters of him or friends can be in the same violation, even have outstanding valid warrants and officers are told to leave them alone. He caused the firing of the town prosecuting attorney because Chief Jeff Gilbert felt the Town Attorney would not follow through on or file ridiculous charges against people involved in a certain political group. He practices selective enforcement in the community against people who do not like him, agree with him or may go against him. He also directs the officers to do the same. This selective enforcement by Chief Jeff Gilbert can influence decision and can initiate negative actions with highly negative results; this practice can also leave the Quartzsite Police Department employees and the City of Quartzsite open to accusations and lawsuits and liabilities. This also give Law Enforcement as a whole, a bad image.

Additionally, Chief Jeff Gilbert has made it clear that he does not have the time to be involved in the daily operations of this department. His attention is diverted to his involvement in politics. He is not involved with the department and is hardly ever present. He takes no interest to those he commands. It is perceived that Chief Jeff Gilbert is oblivious to the decisions, actions and day to day operations of the department, unless it involves politics or someone involved in politics.

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We, the vast majority of employees of the Quartzsite Police Department have seen disparate punishment for similar offenses over the years. What one officer receives discipline for others have no consequences, depending on the personal relationship of the accused. Chief Jeff Gilbert issues discipline based on his emotion, and personal feelings about the individual, rather than the merits of each individual situation or investigation. The most recent incident involved two Officers. A few months ago two Officers were out on a traffic stop with a commercial motor vehicle. A priority domestic violence fight in progress call came over the radio. A Junior Officer responded to the call, while a Senior Officer chose to stay behind and did not respond to provide back up for the officer who was responding alone. The Junior Officer was later placed on admin leave and subsequently was suspended for three days without pay for not having enough detail of the incident documented into his Police report. While the Senior Officer, did not even get a written reprimand for not responding immediately to an emergency call.

More recently, and further startling, Chief Jeff Gilbert has taken to bully tactics, both towards employees and citizens within the community. On several occasions, Chief Jeff Gilbert has harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, and ridiculed employees about their weight, sexual preference, amount of hair on their body, and location of birth. He will do this in front of other employees and in department meetings.

During a department meeting and in front of all the officers, Chief Jeff Gilbert singled out and ridiculed one officer for having too much body hair. He told him that because he was hairy, he must be the one leaving all the pubic hair on the toilet in the men's restroom. He told the officer that he better start wiping the toilet off when he is done for now on. He told an officer that he didn't like the way he wore his pants and forced him to order a larger size. The officer said his pants were comfortable and he preferred them that way. Chief Jeff Gilbert said it didn't matter how he liked to wear his pants. He often makes comments to this officer about his weight. He has made several statements to officers from Mexico, about his nationality. Chief Jeff Gilbert has had several complaints filed against him, some of which are the issues listed above.

Chief Jeff Gilbert will create positions, or try to get an officer fired or to resign so he can hire his friends to fill the other officer's position. When he does hire a "friend" he doesn't have them complete an FTO period or the minimum of a transitional training of the departments needs, policies and geographics of the town and department. He asks officers to harrass certain people from a certain political group. If you are an officer that gives equal treatment to everyone you encounter, then you are not one of the "Chief's buddies". The officers that follow his directions and will do his "dirty work" are the officers that are given special treatment.

For example, he promotes and makes up positions to accommodate the officers that follow these directions. Chief Jeff Gilbert just completed a promotion process. He announced the availability of a position for an officer to be promoted to Sergeant. In the announcement he stated that the requirements for this position were as follows: 1. You must live in the immediate area 2. You must have at least 5 years as a law enforcement officer. If you met the requirements and felt you were qualified to do the job then officers were to put in a letter of interest. Of those that put in a letter of interest, only a few were interviewed. Chief Jeff Gilbert called a few of the officers into his office for the "interview". He told them that this one on one

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talk between the officer and Chief Jeff Gilbert was to considered their interview, written test, oral board , and so on. He said that he didn't need officers or anyone else from other departments to be involved in the testing process telling him how to run his department. He also stated that one of the most important things to him that he will be looking for in a Sergeant is someone who is loyal to him. There were several officers that put in letters of interest that met the requirements and that were more than qualified to do the job. These were officers that have worked anywhere from 3 to 14 years just with this department and some had more years of experience at other agencies as well. Chief Jeff Gilbert promoted an officer who is a "personal friend" of his and his wife. This is an officer who he just hired about a year ago. This officer has been seen several times spending a lot of time both on and off duty with Chief Jeff Gilbert.

The officer that has been promoted has been a certified officer for many years, but has not been working as a Police Officer. For the last 10 years, the officer has worked for liquor control. This officer never had to complete the proper field training and is unfamiliar with department policy and procedures. In the short time this officer has worked with the department it is obvious to other officers that this officer is incapable of doing the job. Several officers have brought it to the attention of Chief Jeff Gilbert and to other Sergeants that the officer is unable to do the job properly and is a liability to the department. Chief Jeff Gilbert refuses to do anything about it because this officer is a "personal friend" to him. This officer has only about 1 year with the department, should still be on probation and lives two and a half hours away from town. The officers have no confidence in this officer as a Sergeant and they feel that the promotion is detrimental to them and the department. This officer has already created unsafe situations for other officers and has shown that they do not have the ability to make proper decisions. The officers want a sergeant that has experience and can provide leadership, and guidance to them. Chief Jeff Gilbert put out a memo letting all officers know that the reason for his choice in the promotion was because the officer would follow his directions.

We as line level employees are expected to hold a very high standard within the community, we expect that our administrators be hold to the same standard of conduct, and the same standard of punishment if these standards are violated.

In closing, we would like to remind you that we are not troublemakers, malcontents or disgruntled employees. We are employees of the Quartzsite Police Department, who have given our hearts and souls to serve the citizens of Quartzsite. Our dedication to the citizens of Quartzsite and the other employees of the Quartzsite Police Department gives us the courage to write this very difficult letter. Our agenda is strictly based in the well-being of the Quartzsite Police Department, and Town of Quartzsite so we may provide the greatest level of service the much deserving members of this community. We know great leadership who we see it and we believe you will lead us through these troubled times.