



Somerville Police Employee's Association

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19 July, 2016

Mayor Curtatone,

The Somerville Police Employees Association and its members are deeply troubled that the City continues to display the Black Lives Matter banner above the main entrance of City Hall. It is as inconceivable to us as it is demoralizing that our City would propagate its support for this movement while standing silent over the seemingly daily protest assassinations of innocent police officers around the country.

The Association is as opposed to the misuse of excessive force, including deadly force, as are the well-intentioned members of the BLM movement. However, it is clear that fringe elements of that movement, and other protest movements, are provoked to indiscriminate violence against police officers in their name. For example, the sniper that murdered five Dallas police officers in cold blood and wounded seven more, has been linked to the Black Lives Matter movement. At a recent Black Lives Matter protest in New York City, a segment of those "protesters" were chanting "What do we want? Dead cops. When do we want it? Now" and "Pigs in a blanket. Fry them like bacon." It was this same element that incited riots, looting, pillaging, vandalism, arson of local businesses, and damage to municipal property.

During a Black Lives Matter protest that shut down Interstate 94 in St Paul Minnesota just days after the five police officers were slain in Dallas, a participant dropped a concrete block on a police officer's head. The officer sustained broken vertebrae. Twenty-one other officers were also injured, to varying degrees, at the same protest. In a twenty-four period, the police arrested 102 protestors for various crimes including assaulting police officers and rioting. St Paul Chief of Police Todd Axtell stated "Last night, really was the first time in my 28 years as a police officer, that I had observed the level of violence that was directed towards public servants." Are these the "peaceful protestors" that you're hitching your wagon to?

On November 19th, the FBI arrested two violent radicals who met at the Ferguson protests in August. Olajuwon Ali Davis and Brandon Orlando Baldwin would eventually plead guilty to buying guns and pipe bombs in a plot to target a police station or simply blow up the Ferguson police chief and the St. Louis County prosecutor. "Both men were members of the New Black Panther Party. Davis had spoken at a public event about Mike Brown's death." – Breitbart, John Sexton. Although Michael Brown has been the catalyst in the protest movement, it is important to remember that just prior to being shot and advancing menacingly toward a police officer, Brown committed a robbery. That officer was eventually acquitted. Kevin Jackson an African

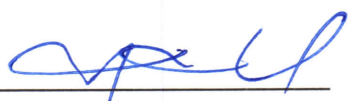
American author quoted, "Michael Brown is a thug who has been elevated to the level of civil rights icon. That just about says it all!"

Another icon of the protest movement, Freddie Gray, died in police custody in Baltimore and immediately the officers were branded as lawless killers. Since then, all of the officers that have stood trial have also been acquitted. And most recently, critics have condemned the police officers involved in the Philando Castile and Alton Sterling shootings for the unnecessary use of deadly force. Whether that condemnation will withstand investigation remains to be seen. The point is that these incidents have incited more than protests; they have incited some within the protest movement to violence against police officers who had nothing to do with the shootings of black men, and have done so before all of the facts of each case were known.

The Somerville Police Employees Association fully endorses the proposition that black lives matter just as much as white, Asian, and Hispanic, and any others do. Similarly, we respect the rights of all American citizens, including those well-intentioned members of the BLM movement, to protest injustice. At the same time, we strongly object to a public banner sponsored by the City that impliedly paints police officers as the killers of innocent citizens of color when there is no evidence whatsoever that the police officers in the City are in anyway using their police powers in a discriminatory or unlawful way.

The vast majority of police officers across this country are tasked with shielding, protecting, and assisting elements of the protest movement that loath them, spit on them, intentionally injure them, and wish death upon them. Unfortunately, these sentiments are felt through ignorance, biased media coverage against law enforcement, and/or as an excuse to carry out an evil agenda under the cover of protest. Nonetheless, it is generally true that officers perform these very tasks with professionalism, honor, integrity, courage, and without hesitation. We take pride in knowing that it is also true in the City of Somerville.

In a letter dated 11 July, 2016, sent on your behalf to the Somerville Police Department you stated, *"...and we are especially fortunate for the courage, honor, and integrity that each of you display daily. Because of you and your outstanding professionalism, Somerville is safer. You have my deepest respect and gratitude for that. You also have my support."* The officers will receive these words as genuine if the banner that unfairly suggests culpability by them in the deaths at the center of the protest movement is taken down from City Hall. Indeed, the removal of that banner and the placement of a banner stating **"ALL LIVES MATTER"** would reflect appropriate concerns that police officers everywhere, as they do in Somerville, use deadly force only when necessary to protect the public or themselves from substantial harm, while simultaneously condemning the reprehensible murder of innocent police officers. Your police officers will be carefully watching for your supportive response to this most important request.



Michael McGrath, President
Somerville Police Employees Association