

Township of FRANKLIN

Somerset County, NJ



Municipal Building

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Following the arrest of Officer Matthew Ellery, and the retirement of Chief Richard Grammar, the Township Council began to take the necessary steps to analyze, and then transform, the leadership of the Township Police Department. The Township Council has now been made aware of clear examples of substantial mismanagement within the Department. This mismanagement was obscured by the fact that New Jersey Law prevents the Township Council and Manager from exercising effective oversight of the day to day management of the Police Department when that Department is headed by a Chief of Police.

For instance, upon accepting the Township Council's request to assume leadership of the Department, the Somerset County Prosecutor's Office has informed the Township Council that there has been substantial abuse of the practice of granting Union Leave to members of the Department. While limited use of this leave is a common practice established by State Law and Collective Negotiations, its use is largely limited to the Presidents of the PBA and Superior Officers Associations and the State PBA delegate. We have now been informed that dozens of officers have used hundreds of days of time contrary to the unambiguous terms of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Upon learning of this practice, it was immediately terminated, and the Township Manager has now taken the necessary steps to recapture the time off inappropriately granted.

This practice is emblematic of the structural deficiencies within the Department that will be corrected by the Township Council. The management reorganization of the Department that began after the retirement of the Police Command staff will continue with the adoption of the Ordinance establishing the position of Public Safety Director. By bringing the day to day operation of the Department under civilian control and the direct authority of the Township Manager, we will enhance public oversight of the Department and ensure that the resources dedicated to the Department are always used to benefit the residents of the Township. The Township Council and Administration were restricted from speaking on these issues, until now, so as not to interfere with any investigation or the effort to recapture the inappropriate time off.

The Township Council is committed to the safety of the residents of Franklin Township and is equally committed to the men and women who serve and protect our Township. The Township Council believes that the current changes and ultimate restructuring of the Department will increase public safety by helping the Department recruit strong leaders, while promoting the advancement of those hard-working officers who put on the uniform each day to serve and protect our Township.