


From: Kenneth M Pileggi <noreply@wichiefs.org>
To: msoens@mtpleasantwi.gov
Date: 2020-08-27 13:18
Subject: Letter to Gov. Evers/Lt. Gov Barnes
Attachments:  8 26 20 Kenosha Release.pdf

All -

Yesterday afternoon myself and 1st VP Chief Mitchell had the opportunity to participate in a conference call with Governor Evers. This was also attended by the Badger State Sheriff's Association, Wisconsin Sheriff's and Deputy Sheriff's Association and Chief Mitchell also represented the WI Police Executive Group.

The nature of the call was to express our disgust with the comments that Governor Evers initially made to the press and the subsequent comments he made regarding the incident in Kenosha with other releases, in essence convicting the officers of wrongdoing prior to the conclusion of the investigation/determination of the District Attorney. Many of you have reached out to me very angry with the inflammatory rhetoric of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor regarding the incident as well as other elected officials, which have now spread onto the national stage as well with some elected officials and wanted us to respond.

I pointed out to the Governor that other than a slight mention, the individual shot has an extensive violent criminal record including fighting with law enforcement officers and that had he not fought with these officers this would have never happened. In other words, suspects need to take personal responsibility for their actions that lead up to these types of situations they get themselves into.

We reminded the Governor that the officer(s) involved also have due process rights and that he should refrain from making any comments without a full investigation being conducted and a charging determination made. We stressed that the officers possessed due process rights just as any other citizen and that the comments he made not only were inflammatory based on assumptions and not fact, but fanned the flames of violence that some of us who have assisted Kenosha PD and Kenosha Sheriff have been part of in dealing with. Further we stressed that he, as Governor, should in the future try to bring people together and not drive them apart as his comments clearly did with, by his own admission, not having all of the facts of the incident when these types of incidents occur. He and Lt. Governor Barnes have convicted these officers without any due process.

Chief Mitchell explained to the Governor that he had eroded police legitimacy by his comments which were not based in fact. He explained to him that such comments from any high ranking public official had a huge affect on all other officers trying to do their jobs and empowered those who encounter police officers to not follow lawful commands given by officers. The point being that he, as Governor, with his comments had de-legitimized police authority eroding people's trust in us in law enforcement overall which in turn could cause huge problems for our officers in the field, some with potentially fatal consequences.

I have attached the letter that we sent to the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. We have all observed the unfair news reports from many different venues, many of which are completely untrue and full of lies without facts - including some releases from local elected leaders.

We are VERY thankful to those elected leaders who have stood up for us in law enforcement. They are calling for the same thing we are here - basic fairness and to let an investigation be conducted impartially and fairly without outside influence.

We, as Chiefs, are all living in really tough times. We told the Governor our officers are the best of the best and that we have GREAT officers on the street that deal with situations which can turn deadly in the flash of a second. We also reminded him that just two weeks ago a Kenosha police officer was shot and thankfully survived.

In the end the Governor thanked us for our concerns but seemed to not take away anything from it. The last question posed to him was how he would now respond if a similar video clip of an incident was released. He stated that he would have to see what the facts were before he would make a comment. He was immediately reminded of his release about his comments he made in Kenosha without knowing all of the facts? He then thanked us for our input and expressed his desire to continue conversations with us. We then concluded our call. Unbelievable.

I want you, as Association members, to know myself as the President and the Executive Board have been doing are very best to fight back on this type of harmful rhetoric. We have been very respectful, open and will remain open to be part of any conversations regarding legislative reforms but will not stand for our officers to be prosecuted in the court of public opinion without due process under the law, especially by those in elected positions, including the Governor.

Ken

This email was sent to msoens@mtpleasantwi.gov by kpileggi@wichiefs.org

Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association

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