



City of Beacon, New York
Office of the Mayor
Lee Kyriacou, Mayor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Beacon Mayor Refutes Police Union Complaint

BEACON, NY: Beacon City Mayor Lee Kyriacou expressed disappointment that the police union is resorting to intimidation and escalation – exactly the opposite behavior of what is appropriate in today’s charged environment. The Mayor pointed out that such belligerent tactics do not represent the training or behavior of the city’s police officers, and that his door remains open to calm, constructive discussion.

Late yesterday, just before a City Council meeting, some City officials became aware of a letter posted online – but not actually sent to anyone in the City – from the Teamsters Local 445 and the City of Beacon Patrolmen’s Benevolent Association. One newspaper called seeking a response before the Mayor had even seen or read a copy.

Upon review of the material today, which contain non-specific and unsupported assertions, the Mayor made the following statement:

“I have supported the honorable men and women of the Beacon Police Department from my first day in office six months ago. In hundreds of individual interactions with officers since then, my first words have always been ‘thank you’ and most recently, ‘I appreciate the difficult situation you are in.’ That support continues unabated – and is never inconsistent with either listening to the concerns of our community or asking questions to consider what change may be needed.

“I am deeply disappointed by the approach of the police union, which has resorted to intimidation and escalation in a highly charged environment – where the community-building approach should be outreach and dialogue. Neither I nor the City Administrator has received a single meeting request, call or email from the leadership of the PBA, requesting a discussion or anything else. Other than a statement from the PBA that I offered to read at a protest, I have heard nothing from them.

“Our police officers are all trained in and must practice de-escalation. The police union tactics ignore de-escalation training – at a time when our community needs to come together. I would encourage them to reach out and be constructive – my door remains open for calm, honest discussion.

“The PBA’s dissatisfaction came to light immediately upon the unanimous appointment of former Beacon Lieutenant William Cornett as Acting Police Chief, to fill in for the short-notice retirement of our chief and captain. I chose someone with a long history in the Beacon police, with a record of integrity and transparency, and with no interest in continuing in the role. That choice safeguards our community, our police department and the City, as we search for permanent leadership. If the PBA is disgruntled at not being able to hand-pick leadership, that simply reflects their failure to engage in dialogue as well as unrealistic expectations.”

“Finally, let me reiterate some of the things I have said in public. I have repeatedly discussed the department’s successful completion of a lengthy U.S. Department of Justice oversight process, as well its continuing accreditation by the NYS Law Enforcement Accreditation Program – the latter an

achievement shared by only a handful of local departments. And while anyone who has observed me on City Council knows I am incredibly protective of spending taxpayer dollars, I have made no definitive statements regarding funding levels of the police department going forward.

“Again, my door remains open.”

About the City of Beacon:

Beacon, New York is located on the eastern shore of the Hudson River 60 miles north of New York City, with a population of 15,000. Originally a Native American settlement, the area was purchased from the Wappinger Tribe in 1683 and settled by Dutch and other Europeans, leading to the riverfront community of Fishkill Landing on the Hudson, and the mill community of Matteawan on Fishkill Creek. The two communities were incorporated together as the City of Beacon in 1913, named for the Revolutionary War signal fires on Mount Beacon. Beacon thrived as a 19th and 20th Century factory city, but as factories closed after WWII and the local economy declined, the city went through a period of hard times. Today, Beacon has successfully reinvented itself as a 21st Century river community centered around tourism, the arts and access to the scenic Hudson River heritage area. A diverse and thriving small city, it is now home to DIA:Beacon (one of the largest exhibition spaces in the country for modern and contemporary art), a network of Hudson River parks connecting to Fishkill Creek and Mount Beacon trails, and a vibrant historic Main Street of art galleries, shops, cultural venues and restaurants.

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