



BALTIMORE COUNTY LODGE NO. 4  
**FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE**

INCORPORATED

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### **President's Message - Meeting with Chief Hyatt**

On Thursday, July 2, 2020 I met with Chief Hyatt to discuss several items of importance to the membership. The meeting was attended by Chief Hyatt, Lt Steinebrunner and me. The meeting was in the conference room at the Office of the Chief and lasted over three hours.

As the meeting began, I expressed the frustration of the membership throughout the agency that was clearly communicated at the general membership meeting on June 29, 2020. I have never experienced a meeting with that level of anger and dissatisfaction about the agency in all my time with this organization. We had a cross section of all members, ranks, and units within the department. This meeting with her was going to be difficult, but the goal was to be constructive and bring us to a good place and allow us to move forward.

Below is a brief synopsis of the meeting and some of the topics discussed.

The membership expressed a high level of anxiety about doing this job. They were not speaking about their own personal safety; we all understand this danger is a part of this job. Several members expressed their lack of confidence in the agency supporting them even if they were to take justified action and followed policy/training. The Chief and/or County Administration, if it were politically expedient, would not support them. There was a lack of confidence in the County Administration and her ability to be the Chief of this agency. The lines of communication were ineffective at all levels. The decision-making process is "bottlenecked" because it seems as though most decisions had to go through her office. She needed to include her commanders in the process, delegate more and hold them accountable to get things done.

The press conference with the County Executive is an example that was discussed. The updating of the use of force policy came across as disingenuous. While factually accurate, it was carefully worded so that it would appear to a lay individual the agency was updating the policy to include de-escalation training, ICAT, implicit bias training, duty to intervene, etc. There should have been more emphasis on what we do well and that we have already been using these tactics for several years. The members feel this was a political stunt by the County Executive at their expense.

There is also a lack of inclusion in the decision and policy making process. Commanders, department members and the FOP should be included more often. We have a lot of experience and subject matter experts that can bring a lot to the table and be constructive. Currently, all decisions are being made by a group of people in the "inner circle" with no input from others. This lack of transparency builds distrust and prevents "buy-in" with the membership.

The membership has some frustration with the promotion process. Specifically, two members who were not promoted recently. She denied the promotions even after every rank from Sergeant to Colonel had designated them as promotable. When the members requested to meet with her, she denied the



meeting. The membership felt it was part of her job as a boss to bring them in and have a face to face meeting and explain her decision. Chief Hyatt stated that she stands by her decision about the promotion but acknowledges she owed both members an in-person meeting with the decision maker.

Other items discussed include, Police Personnel problems, the change in IAD process, the Major City Chief's letter, the upcoming session in Annapolis, more visibility with the members, public support of the members, positive BWC videos and examples of de-escalation released to media.

Many members have contacted me to express their desire that the meeting go well, so we can move forward. I believe the meeting went well and was both informative and enlightening. We discussed everything I had on my agenda and topics given to me by members. Chief Hyatt sat there and listened attentively, asked good questions, and provided no excuses whatsoever. It is difficult to sit in a meeting and hear feedback on things you thought were going well to hear things were not so well. However, I believe she will make every effort to evolve and make this agency succeed. In turn, we should be there to help make that happen.

Obviously, I cannot put the entire context of a three-hour meeting in one document. If you have any additional questions or concerns, please speak with one of our board members or reach out to me and we will do everything we can to get you an answer.

Fraternally,

Dave Rose  
President



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