



Wanda E. Jones

E-Mail: wej@indianajoneslaw.com

PO Box 1797
8320 Kennedy Ave.
Highland, IN 46322
Phone: (219) 844-8888
Fax: (219) 844-8878

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION TO:
b.atty@sbcglobal.net

August 13, 2024

Charles Braun, Esq.
1135 Glen Cove Road
Indianapolis, IN 46236-9008

54 South Jefferson Street
P.O. Box 1759
Nashville, IN 47448
Phone: (812) 988-2818
Fax: (812) 988-2837

RE: Heather Burris

Dear Attorney Braun:

This letter serves to set forth the issues regarding Heather Burris' (hereinafter "HB") employment as Chief of Police for Nashville, Indiana. HB was notified of these issues informally several times from February through July 2024. When no changes were forthcoming, an Executive Session occurred, with input from the entire Nashville Town Council (hereinafter "NTC") on June 20, 2024 and June 26, 2024. A meeting then occurred with HB on July 12, 2024 with the NTC at which time all the issues were discussed with her and repeated requests made for changes. A meeting immediately thereafter occurred with the Nashville Police Merit Commission (NPMB) and the NTC where all matters discussed with HB were reiterated to the Commission. The President of the Police Merit Commission (PMC), Ken Wendling, promised to discuss the issues with HB again. On July 22, 2024, a meeting was held at Jones Law Offices wherein the issues were again discussed with HB.

1. Coverage for the Town of Nashville

The Council has repeatedly asked HB to provide officer coverage of the town for Thursday, Friday, and Saturdays, which are the days when virtually all of the visitors come to Nashville. HB has consistently scheduled officers for 6 AM to 6 PM Monday through Wednesday with no coverage on the evenings during weekends. Sometimes there is an officer scheduled from 6 AM to 6 PM, but when no one is available, a Reserve officer is scheduled from 8 AM until 4 PM. This is not addressing the issue because evening is when coverage is needed. This is a huge problem because there is not a Town officer on duty to respond to calls, and residents feel they do not want to call the police because there is no one to respond. People feel they are not safe, and that there is no Town police presence in the town. There have been instances where shoplifters were caught red handed and the Town police did not follow up. These are serious accusations which HB has ignored.

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2. Officer Presence in the Town of Nashville

The Town Council requested that officers patrol the town on foot during their shifts so that they get to know the shop owners and give the residents a sense of security. Nashville is a small community, and walking the downtown area would not take more than an hour. HB has not assigned or required this duty to officers.

3. Reserve Officers Using Cars for Personal Use

The Council has asked that HB forbid reserve officers from taking reserve vehicles outside of the County regardless of the reason. The expense for gasoline and vehicle maintenance is enormous, and the budget cannot accommodate the cost of reserve officers taking vehicles assigned to them outside of the County. This problem has also not been rectified.

4. Residence of Chief

HB currently lives in New Palestine which is sixty-eight miles from the town of Nashville. The Council orally agreed to HB remaining in her residence at the time of hire until her son graduated from high school, which he did this spring. The Council has asked HB to move within twenty (20) miles of Nashville, which she apparently is not willing to do, as she suggested living in Indianapolis.

5. Overtime Log

The Council is also concerned about the overtime that has been logged – there has been no sufficient explanation given as to why the overtime was logged. HB said this would change when we got a third FT officer, however the OT took place when there were three full-time officers on shift and those three incurred the OT.

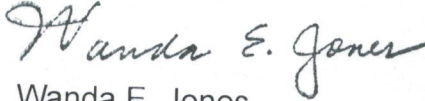
These are the concerns that the Council has among others. The Council agrees to a two week period, ending on August 26, 2024 at 12 noon, providing nothing occurs in the interim by HB that would warrant an immediate dismissal. You specifically asked for this time to review the situation with your client – we are agreeable to same provided nothing occurs which would merit an immediate dismissal without a reference.

It is the belief of the Council that if HB were to resign, effective immediately, her actions would be in the best interest of herself as well as the Town. HB has no contract with the Town, and in the event, she determines to stay she will go back to her duties as a Patrol Officer at the rate of pay of a patrol officer pursuant to the Standard Operating Procedures of the Nashville Police Department and Town of Nashville Salary Ordinance 2023-14.

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If HB were to resign immediately, the Town would provide her with a reference for future employers.

Very truly yours,


Wanda E. Jones

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