



14 October 2021

Honorable Mayor Dyer, Vice Mayor Wilson, and Council,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the nearly 500 Police officers and Detectives proudly represented by the Virginia Beach Police Benevolent Association (PBA). I'm sure that you are aware that during the Commonwealth of Virginia's second special session of 2021, the budget bill was passed. This budget included bonuses in the amount of \$3,000 (reduced from the proposed \$5,000) for sheriff deputies throughout our great commonwealth, including our brothers and sisters of the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Department. Unfortunately, some law makers chose to deny this show of support to municipal police officers by voting against the request that would have included us for this bonus. Clearly, this was very disappointing to officers and detectives everywhere. These funds are provided by the "American Rescue Plan Act". They have been described as a show of appreciation for the dedication of law enforcement during the Covid Pandemic and a means to address retention concerns. Clearly, making the distinction that the Virginia Beach Sheriff's deputies *deserve* this consideration *and not* the men and women of the Virginia Beach Police Department is insulting to these officers. We made no less a sacrifice during this time and have had greater retention concerns.

As the covid-19 crisis unfolded across our commonwealth, and our nation, Virginia Beach officers stood on the front lines of our city without the option to work from home or the ability to social distance. Often, we did so without the proper protection being provided. Today, we continue to protect and serve even as a new strain of the virus spreads. The number of Law Enforcement officers who died in the line of duty in 2020 increased 60% over the previous year. In the category of "Other" causes, there were 145 confirmed Covid-19 deaths, this is an increase in this category of 300%. The year 2020 had the most line of duty deaths since 1974. The fact that the covid-19 deaths contributed to this sad total cannot be ignored. Each officer has bravely accepted risk as a part of their lives. The covid-19 pandemic is a risk officers were never trained to assume. But assume it we have.

I am respectfully asking that you use a portion of the "American Rescue Plan Act" that the City of Virginia Beach has received to show your appreciation and correct this inequality between our two great law enforcement agencies.

Brian "Lucky" Luciano  
President, VB PBA Local #34



18 October 2021

Honorable Mayor Dyer, Vice Mayor Wilson, Councilmembers,

I would like to take a moment to address the recent suggested resolution that would prevent a Virginia Beach employee from serving on the Virginia Beach City Council. First, I must commend everyone involved for their concern over the integrity of council. It is a great reminder that council must be held to the highest standard possible and must pay the steepest penalty if that trust is violated. This is something that those of us in Law Enforcement know a great deal about already.

However, I do have to wonder why this has become a concern recently. I'm not prepared to jump to the conclusion that this is only an issue because we now have a councilman who wears a badge. I will hold judgement until all the facts are in. Again, this is something that those of us in Law Enforcement are familiar with. Unfortunately, this same courtesy is rarely afforded to us.

As I look at the current council, I see the most diverse council in our city's history. Clearly, this is a positive for our city as each member brings their own unique life experiences to council chambers. These experiences, be they education, religious, familial, or professional, have helped shape each of you and undoubtedly guide your decisions as a member of council. We trust that each of you will use those experiences, *or put them aside*, when necessary, when you make a decision that effects the lives of those you represent. We also trust that you will recuse yourself if you are unable to reconcile these issues. Unless I am incorrect, I believe a system is already in place to safeguard against such conflicts. I would hope that each of you would seek guidance from the city attorney on issues of potential conflict, or that the city attorney would step in and prevent a conflict from taking place. If these safeguards are not in place, or if you feel they are unreliable, clearly *no one* on council can be trusted to cast an unbiased vote.

Furthermore, as we hear conversations coming from council on how to better improve the lives of our valuable city employees and how to show appreciation for their dedication to keeping our city running, is disenfranchising them truly the right message to send? We join our brothers and sisters of the *Virginia Beach Professional Firefighters Association* by opposing the effort to repeal this legislation.

Brian Luciano  
President  
VB Police Benevolent Association, Local #34



17 November 2021

Honorable Mayor Dyer, Vice Mayor Wilson, Council Members,

On behalf of the hundreds of Police Officers and Detectives represented by the PBA, as well as their families, I thank you for your recent vote which will provide each of these heroic and dedicated employees one thousand dollars from the ARPA. I assure you it is appreciated, and its timing is impactful.

I want to specifically acknowledge Mayor Dyer, Vice Mayor Wilson, and Councilwoman Henley for their thoughtful comments during council's discussion on the matter. I also want to acknowledge Councilman Holcomb for his on the record disclosure prior to the vote. Our faith in Councilman Holcomb and the system referenced in our previous letter was on display for all to see.

I would remind some that the city work force is not made up of a nameless, faceless, entity known only as "*the work force*" or "*employees*". They are dedicated individuals who make sure Virginia Beach is a great place to live and raise a family, often at a higher standard of living than they themselves can afford.

While I can only provide anecdotal information as to the difference this show of appreciation makes, I assure you it exists and I do believe that the analytical data desired will be collected at the ballot box.

Brian "Lucky" Luciano

President

Virginia Beach Police Benevolent Association