

May 18th, 2020

Dear Mayor Hudson,

My name is Gusti Labatte-Deneau and I'm the spouse of a Police Officer with the Fort Pierce Police Department. I'm reaching out to you in hopes you will help the officers. I'm sure you are aware of the overwhelming number of officers leaving the department to seek employment with neighboring agencies. This has been a struggle for quite some time and no resolution or effective measures have been implemented to combat this issue. Officer pay is clearly a staggering issue as presented to you and the city commissioners last year during their presentation illustrating their needs and the devastating differences in officer pay. The statements made by the members of the commission that night about helping the officers get back into their proper steps were insightful and motivating.

Unfortunately, no changes were made. As a result, approximately 16 experienced officers have left the department, leaving the city open to unexperienced officers patrolling and the seasoned ones picking up the slacks.

I do have a question for You, as well as the commissioners under your leadership. What would you do if you were in their shoes... Would you stay when given the opportunity to make \$15,000-20,000 more above your current salary? Would you stay? I'll be curious to know the answer.

I know that my husband along with many on his shift do their very best. I honestly have asked him to leave and join other departments but his heart is with Fort Pierce PD. Every day I pray that he safely returns home and I know the same goes for all the spouses out there.

I pray that you all can put yourself in the officers shoes. It was extremely disheartening once it was announced that the only solution that was prepared was another 3% (across the board) raise. Since 2015 over 49 officers have left the Fort Pierce Police Department because of low pay, even while many of them are already vested. It seems that FPPD has become a training ground for the other neighboring agencies. These numbers will continue to grow if the interests of the officers are continuously overlooked.

Mayor Hudson, I am coming to you asking for your support for the officers who tireless work to keep the city of Fort Pierce safe. These officers are on the front lines every day, doing everything they can for the citizens of Fort Pierce.

Please invest in them. Your officers and their families look forward to a productive discussion concerning these issues at the Commission Meeting scheduled for this Monday (05/18/2020).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours

Gusti Labatte-Deneau
Concerned wife