

February 14, 2021

Sheriff Jim Hammond
Hamilton County Sheriff's Office
600 Market Street, Suite G10
Chattanooga, TN 37402

Dear Sheriff Hammond:

In July of 2020, Chattanooga-area clergy issued a call for your resignation as a no faith response in your ability and interest to effectively and justly serve as Hamilton County Sheriff. In your public response to that letter you claimed you “didn’t recognize any names on the list” and wanted “to meet with the church leaders who drafted the letter.”¹ The fact is--you have met with many of us. You even commissioned a Task Force as a result of those (previous) meetings where priorities included *Transparency Following any Alleged Law Enforcement Wrongdoing*.² Yet, your silence in response to multiple requests for transparency and accountability speaks volumes.

City clergy and our communities continue to be alarmed by clear instances of brutal treatment of citizens by HCSO officers. Since you were elected in 2008, more than nineteen violations involving your officers have been reported and documented. While some remain unnamed, eight of your officers have been identified in reports as having committed offenses. Only one of these officers has been fired, while others have either resigned or remain on paid leave.

Your office continues to resist public calls for information regarding HCSO operations. Attempts made by clergy and other concerned citizens to obtain official HCSO policies and procedures have been met with silence and misdirection. These should be easily accessible public documents. It is past time for your office to respond to the public and uphold basic principles of transparency and accountability.

Sheriff Hammond, we call on you to produce the following by March 12, 2021:

- HCSO official policy and procedures guidelines on officer training and patrol services, especially regarding standards for “use of force” and for the medication and feeding of detained individuals.

¹News Channel Nine, “Sherriff Hammond Responds to Letter Demanding His Resignation.” July 4, 2020. URL: <https://newschannel9.com/news/local/local-pastors-and-clergy-members-call-for-sheriff-jim-hammonds-resignation-saturday>.

²See attachment.

- Clear answers related to staff development and internal training on official policies, including:
 - The regular schedule of staff development and training sessions
 - Personnel running and facilitating regular training sessions
 - Whether development and training sessions are mandatory for officers and how that is enforced.
 - Frequency and expectations of officers going through development and training sessions.

- HCSO official policies around hiring and firing of officers who use excessive force, including:
 - Officers who have been fired or decertified for misconduct involving excessive or unjustified use of force.
 - Officers who have received sustained complaints of misconduct involving excessive or unjustified force.

As Clergy representing concerned communities across Hamilton County, we expect the requested information to be shared in an official response from your office by the date indicated above. If we are again met with silence, or with further inaccuracies or misinformation, Chattanooga Clergy for Justice is prepared to take further legal steps to ensure transparency and accountability regarding policing and incarceration in Hamilton County.

Signed,
Chattanooga Clergy for Justice

Religious Leaders in Support of Chattanooga Clergy for Justice

Rev. Dr. Thomas O . Bagley, Jr.
Rev. Jay Banasiak
Pastor Marcellus Barnes, Sr.
Rev. Laura Becker
Pastor Troy Brand
Rev. Matt Busby
Rev. Susan J. Butler
Pastor Timothy Careathers
Pastor Jeff P. Crim
Rev. Tricia Dillon Thomas
Pastor Undra C. Finley
Pastor Anna Golladay

Rev. Brandon Gilvin
Rev Mandy Goheen
Rev. Leroy Griffith
Dr. Donald Grohman
Rev. Sheila Harris
The Rev. Robert Hartmans
Elder Lionel Hodges
Rev. Jonathan Hyde
Pastor Terryl James
The Rev. Leyla King
Rev. Dr. William Terry Ladd, III
Rabbi Craig Lewis
Rev. Cathy Meyer
Dr. Jaclyn A. Michael
Paige Moffett
Brother Kevin Muhammad
Rev. Margaret Poteet
Dr. Ernest L. Reid, Jr.
Marilyn W. Sizer, M.Div
Warren Tefft
Rev. Dr. Clay Thomas
Dr. Jonathan Thomas
Pastor Edward Thrasher
Pastor Carlos Williams
Rev. Charlotte S.N.N. Williams
Rev. Dr. Jeffery Wilson
The Rev. Chris Woodhull
Rev Josh Woodrow
Rev. Candace A. Worth

Organizational Supporters,

CALEB
Chattanooga Democratic Socialists of America
Concerned Citizens for Justice
TN Poor People's Campaign Eastern Region
TN United
Unity Group of Chattanooga

cc: (via electronic mail)
Hamilton County Mayor Jim Coppinger
Hamilton County Board of Commissioners

Hamilton County District Attorney General Neil Pinkston
Hamilton County Chief Deputy Austin Garrett
Governor of Tennessee Bill Lee



SHERIFF'S OFFICE HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

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March 27, 2019

To the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office Minority Relations Community Taskforce

Dear Taskforce Members:

On behalf of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office (HCSO), I want to thank you for agreeing to serve as a member of our newly commissioned Minority Relations Community Taskforce. As a member of this important taskforce, you represent a wide variety of disciplines within our local minority community including law enforcement, firefighters, members of the clergy, educators, and other community stakeholders.

I am commissioning this HCSO Minority Relations Community Taskforce to help us further develop more meaningful relationships between our agency and the local minority community we serve. Together, we can use our relationships and your support to advance the HCSO's goals of strengthening community-oriented policing (COPS) with its focus on working cooperatively within the community. Besides our increasing efforts to recruit more minorities, our plan for the community would include doing what we can to improve:

- Community Perception of Law Enforcement
- Community Engagement from Law Enforcement
- Transparency Following any Alleged Law Enforcement Wrongdoing
- Law Enforcement Self-Regulation

Once again, thank you for agreeing to serve as a member of our new HCSO Minority Relations Community Taskforce. I value your opinion and look forward to your input and support as we work together to improve relationships within our minority communities.

Sincerely,

Jim Hammond
Sheriff

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Hammond", written over a large, stylized blue scribble.