



Orange Township Fire Department

TO: Orange Township Board of Trustees
Township Administrator Lee Bodnar
HR/Communications Manager Amanda Sheterom

CC: Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville
IAFF Local 3816 President Keith Myers
Fiscal Officer Wesley Mayer

FROM: Fire Chief Matt Noble

DATE: December 5, 2019

RE: Hearing Officer Report regarding [REDACTED] Harassment and Hazing Complaint Investigation
- Belville

Appearances:

For the Employer: Fire Chief Matt Noble
HR/Communications Manager Amanda Sheterom
Township Legal Counsel Brian Zets

For the Employee: Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville
IAFF Local 3816 President Keith Myers
IAFF Local 3816 Vice-President Andrew Sapp
IAFF Local 3816 Legal Counsel Henry Arnett
IAFF Local 3816 Legal Co-Counsel Colleen Arnett

Background:

The employer conducted an investigation as a result of information conveyed to Fire Chief Matt Noble on Thursday, September 12, 2019 by Captain AJ Miller and later by Lieutenant Ken Brooks regarding Part-Time Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] and his treatment by Full-Time Firefighters on 1-Unit at Station 361. Specifically, the investigation was conducted to determine whether [REDACTED] was hazed and harassed by other firefighters within the department on 1-Unit warranting discipline as a result of those actions.

The investigation consisted of various interviews of [REDACTED], interviews with individuals coming forward to provide information and administrative investigative interviews of identified witnesses and personnel accused of engaging in alleged hazing and harassment. The administrative investigative interviews that Notice and Order to Appear notices were sent for were recorded.

Attachments:

Investigation Report dated November 20, 2019

Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville Prepared Statement (Exhibit Belville Statement)

Presentation of Charges:

Chief Matt Noble presented the completed investigation report with findings and exhibits of which Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville was provided on Wednesday, November 20, 2019. Chief Noble presented the following charges against Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville that resulted from the investigation:

1. **Inappropriate Behavior** – Section 2. Item B of the Inappropriate Behavior Policy – Threats and acts of physical violence for touching, hitting, and/or tapping Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] and Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] in the groin.
2. **Inappropriate Behavior** – Section 2. Item D of the Inappropriate Behavior Policy - Abusive behavior, hazing and harassment by telling Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] he was “fucking embarrassing”, he was a “cousin-fucker”, for telling him to “shut the fuck up”, for touching, hitting, and/or tapping Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] and Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] in the groin and creating such an environment that Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] would flinch and cover himself expecting to be hit in the groin when someone walked by.
3. **Conduct Unbecoming** – Section 7 of the Standards of Conduct Policy - Abusive behavior, hazing and harassment by telling Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] he was “fucking embarrassing”, he was a “cousin-fucker”, for telling him to “shut the fuck up”, for touching, hitting, and/or tapping Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] and Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] in the groin and creating such an environment that Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] would flinch and cover himself expecting to be hit in the groin when someone walked by.
4. **Conduct Unbecoming** – Section 16 of the Standards of Conduct Policy - During Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville’s Administrative Investigative Interview, failed to provide a complete and truthful account of the facts.
5. **Conduct Unbecoming** – Section 17 of the Standards of Conduct Policy - Abusive behavior, hazing and harassment by telling Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] he was “fucking embarrassing”, he was a “cousin-fucker”, for telling him to “shut the fuck up”, for touching, hitting, and/or tapping Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] and Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] in the groin and creating such an environment that Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] would flinch and cover himself expecting to be hit in the groin when someone walked by.

Chief Noble then provided Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville an opportunity to respond to the investigation report and charges against him.

Presentation and Response for the Employee:

Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville presented and read a written prepared statement.

Legal Counsel Henry Arnett asked FF Belville how long this had been going on and when Firefighter [REDACTED] started. FF Belville wasn't sure of when FF [REDACTED] started but did indicate the behavior started shortly after he started. FF Belville indicated FF [REDACTED] introduced himself and showed a picture of his fiancé indicating he loved his cousin and he was "fucking" his cousin. FF Belville indicated the "fucking embarrassing" came from a television show called Letterkenny; however, the other activities had been going on for years. Mr. Arnett questioned FF Belville on the charge of not providing complete and truthful account of the facts and FF Belville indicated the only thing he thought was the difference between saying "fucking embarrassing" and "you are fucking embarrassing".

Union Vice-President Andrew Sapp spoke on behalf of the Union for FF Belville. Lt. Sapp said while they don't condone the activity, they would ask for some leniency given he is an excellent firefighter and paramedic and would hate to see him terminated as it would be difficult to find a replacement with his experience and knowledge.

Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville had no other information or evidence to present.

Findings:

1. **Inappropriate Behavior** – Section 2. Item B of the Inappropriate Behavior Policy – Threats and acts of physical violence for touching, hitting, and/or tapping Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] and Firefighter/Paramedic Forrest Dill in the groin.
 - **I find that Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville has violated this policy for reasons presented in the [REDACTED] Investigation Report.**
2. **Inappropriate Behavior** – Section 2. Item D of the Inappropriate Behavior Policy - Abusive behavior, hazing and harassment by telling Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] he was "fucking embarrassing", he was a "cousin-fucker", for telling him to "shut the fuck up", for touching, hitting, and/or tapping Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] and Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] in the groin and creating such an environment that Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] would flinch and cover himself expecting to be hit in the groin when someone walked by.
 - **I find that Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville has violated this policy for reasons presented in the [REDACTED] Investigation Report.**
3. **Conduct Unbecoming** – Section 7 of the Standards of Conduct Policy - Abusive behavior, hazing and harassment by telling Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] he was "fucking embarrassing", he was a "cousin-fucker", for telling him to "shut the fuck up", for touching, hitting, and/or tapping Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] and Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] in the groin and creating such an environment that Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] would flinch and cover himself expecting to be hit in the groin when someone walked by.
 - **I find that Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville has violated this policy for reasons presented in the [REDACTED] Investigation Report.**

4. **Conduct Unbecoming** – Section 16 of the Standards of Conduct Policy - During Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville's Administrative Investigative Interview, failed to provide a complete and truthful account of the facts.
 - **I find that Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville has violated this policy for reasons presented in the [REDACTED] Investigation Report.**
5. **Conduct Unbecoming** – Section 17 of the Standards of Conduct Policy - Abusive behavior, hazing and harassment by telling Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] he was "fucking embarrassing", he was a "cousin-fucker", for telling him to "shut the fuck up", for touching, hitting, and/or tapping Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] and Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] in the groin and creating such an environment that Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] would flinch and cover himself expecting to be hit in the groin when someone walked by.
 - **I find that Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville has violated this policy for reasons presented in the [REDACTED] Investigation Report.**

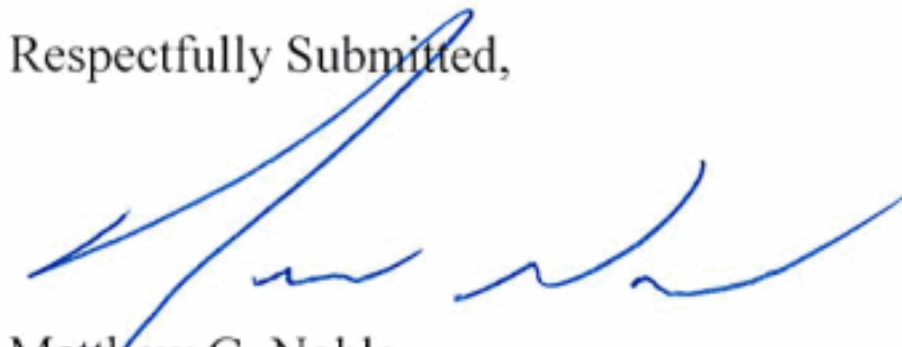
Recommendation:

First responders are held to a higher standard of conduct. Hazing, harassment, assault, bullying, name calling and intimidation are unacceptable. We should be very attuned to this given the #MeToo Movement, bullying case studies, hazing and harassment related Post Traumatic Stress (PTS), suicide related to hazing and harassment, and not to mention local incidents recently in the news as exemplified with Ohio University Fraternity hazing incidents and the City of Columbus – Division of Fire sexual harassment incidents.

The actions against Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] went beyond typical firehouse behavior. Not only was there continued verbal hazing and harassment, but also repeated physical contact. This is not typical firehouse behavior, nor is it the fault of the victim, Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED]

As a result of the evidence presented in the [REDACTED] Investigation Report dated November 20, 2019, I recommend that Firefighter/Paramedic Bradley Belville be discharged from his employment with the Orange Township Fire Department.

Respectfully Submitted,



Matthew G. Noble
Fire Chief

EXHIBIT BELVILLE STATEMENT

December 4, 2019

I am standing in front of you today to express a formal apology for the actions and events over the course of the last few months. I accept full responsibility for my actions, and I am sorry to everyone involved.

My actions began as what I perceived to be typical firehouse behavior. I did not realize that I had crossed any lines, nor did I ever intend to cause anyone any undue stress and difficulty. Regarding Firefighter/Paramedic [REDACTED] specifically, it was never indicated by him or by any of my superiors to me that he thought my behavior was harassing or that he thought he was being treated unfairly. [REDACTED] was very comfortable approaching me with job related questions. This included after his transfer, for instance, I was working an overtime shift a few days prior to my suspension, [REDACTED] was asking me questions about equipment carried on E-362. I went over the equipment with him in the bay and answered his questions. My shift had also regularly covered the cost of his meals and sent leftover food home with him as he indicated and discussed financial stress with all of us. This however certainly does not excuse my behavior.

I understand that the feeling is that I should be disciplined for my actions, but I do not feel that my misconduct should warrant the level of termination. My 10-year history with the Orange Township Fire Department is solid and I hope that you will take that into consideration when issuing an appropriate consequence for my actions.

I am sorry for bringing any negative attention to the department, yourself (Chief Matt Noble), my peers, the Board of Trustees and any other persons involved in this investigation. My intentions were never to cause any harm.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bradley S. Belville', written in a cursive style.

Bradley S Belville
FF/Paramedic

