



CITY OF NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS

Office of the Mayor
Thomas W. Bernard

July 10, 2020

Suzy Helme
123 Church Street
North Adams, MA 01247

Dear Suzy:

This letter is pursuant to a complaint filed with the North Adams Police Department regarding a June 30, 2020, social media post and subsequent comment thread on your personal Facebook account. Upon review of the complaint and consultation with legal counsel I find that this post and your participation in the comment thread constitute a violation of the City's harassment policy, but do not constitute a threat of physical harm by you against the complainant.

Accordingly, this letter serves as a warning under the policy to refrain from such behavior in the future.

Sincerely,

Tom Bernard
Mayor

cc: Chief Jason Wood
Marie Harpin

Enclosures: City of North Adams Harassment Policy
North Adams Police Department Incident Report #20-893-OF
July 9, 2020, letter from Marie Harpin, North Adams City Councilor,
to North Adams Police Chief Jason Wood

2.8. Harassment policy

Purpose: To create for every City of North Adams employee an atmosphere that is free from all forms of harassment and discrimination.

- Harassment generally: The City of North Adams is committed to providing a work environment that fosters mutual respect. The city specifically prohibits any form of harassment on any basis, including race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, genetic information, citizenship status, marital status, sexual orientation, veterans' or military status, age, or physical or mental disability, by or toward employees, contractors, and vendors. For the purposes of this policy, harassment means offensive, unwelcome physical or verbal behavior.
- Violations of this policy: Violations of this policy will not be tolerated. Any employee, supervisor, or official who violates this policy will be subject to discipline that can range from a warning up to and including immediate discharge.
- Protection against retaliation: It is unlawful to retaliate in any way against an individual who makes a report of harassment, and the City of North Adams will not permit any employee or supervisor to do so. It is also unlawful to retaliate in any way against an individual who cooperates in an investigation of a complaint for harassment. Retaliation is a violation of this policy, subject to the same discipline as harassment itself, and should be reported immediately as set forth below.
- Complaints and investigation:
 - Any employee who believes that they are a victim of harassment or witnesses such harassment should immediately report the matter to the director of public safety, director of public services, director of inspection services, administrative officer or the mayor. The matter will be thoroughly investigated. Immediate notification will give the city the opportunity to investigate and deal promptly with a complaint.
 - Upon the completion of an investigation of a harassment complaint, the city shall communicate its findings and intended actions to the complainant and the alleged offender. If, as a result of the investigation, it is determined that harassment has occurred, the offender will be subject to the appropriate discipline.



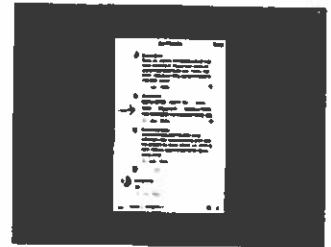
North Adams Police Department
Incident Report

Incident #: 20-893-OF

Date/Time Reported: 07/06/2020 1000
Report Date/Time: 07/06/2020 1035
Occurred On: 07/02/2020 0000
Status: No Crime Involved

Reporting Officer: Chief Jason Wood

Signature: _____



#	INVOLVED	SEX	RACE	AGE	SSN	PHONE
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1	HELME, SUSAN L [REDACTED] NORTH ADAMS MA 01247	F	W	43	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
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Military Active Duty: N
 HEIGHT: 506 WEIGHT: HAIR: BLACK EYES: BROWN
 BODY: NOT AVAIL. COMPLEXION: NOT AVAIL.
 DOB: [REDACTED] PLACE OF BIRTH: NOT AVAIL.
 LICENSE NUMBER: [REDACTED] ETHNICITY: NOT HISPANIC

[CONTACT INFORMATION]

Home Phone (Primary) [REDACTED]

[APPEARANCE]

GLASSES WORN: NO

2	CIVELLO, JENNIFER RANCOURT [REDACTED]	F	W	43		
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Military Active Duty: N
 BODY: NOT AVAIL. COMPLEXION: NOT AVAIL.
 DOB: [REDACTED] PLACE OF BIRTH: NOT AVAIL.
 LICENSE NUMBER: NOT AVAIL. ETHNICITY: NOT HISPANIC

[APPEARANCE]

GLASSES WORN: NO

ALIAS LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE NAME	SSN	DOB
RANCOURT	JENNIFER		NOT AVAIL	NOT AVAIL

North Adams Police Department
Incident Report

Incident #: 20-893-OF

INVOLVED SEX RACE AGE SSN PHONE

3 MINER, REBECCA M F W 39 [REDACTED]
N ADAMS MA 01247-2716

Military Active Duty: N
BODY: NOT AVAIL. COMPLEXION: NOT AVAIL.
DOB: [REDACTED] PLACE OF BIRTH: NOT AVAIL.
LICENSE NUMBER: MA S21901352 ETHNICITY: NOT HISPANIC

[CONTACT INFORMATION]

Home Phone (Primary) [REDACTED]
Home Phone

[APPEARANCE]

GLASSES WORN: NO

EVENTS(S)

LOCATION TYPE: Residence/Home/Apt./Condo Zone: (Zone 42) Patrol Area 23
ASHLAND ST
NORTH ADAMS MA 01247

1 CONVERSATION ON FACEBOOK

VICTIM(S) SEX RACE AGE SSN PHONE

1 HARPIN, MARIE T F 54
680 ASHLAND ST
NORTH ADAMS MA 01247
DOB:
EMPLOYER:
INJURIES: None
ETHNICITY:
RESIDENT STATUS: Resident
VICTIM CONNECTED TO OFFENSE NUMBER(S): 1
RELATION TO: HELME SUSAN Otherwise Known
RELATION TO: CIVELLO JENNIFER Stranger
RELATION TO: MINER REBECCA Otherwise Known
CONTACT INFORMATION:
Home Phone (Primary) 413-346-3466
Home Phone 413-652-5638

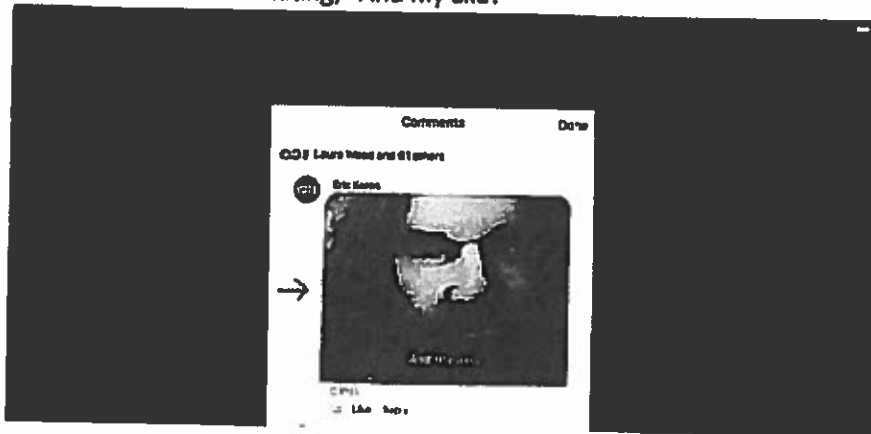
Attachments for 20-893-OF

Description	Type
NARRATIVE	DOCX
Attachment#: 8320FE81C512468AB800170E75310FC6	

On 07/06/2020 at approximately 10:00am, Marie Harpin of North Adams came to my office with a concern. Harpin stated she was fearful for her safety after a conversation she read on FaceBook in which she was the subject. The conversation was lengthy between numerous parties. However, in regard to this report, the involved participants were Susan Helme of North Adams MA, Jennifer Civello of Adams MA, Rebecca Miner of North Adams, MA and Eric Kerns (local business owner - could not locate license information).

The conversation was about the City Council meeting that took place on Tuesday June 30, 2020. In that meeting, Harpin, who is a city councilor, voiced some concerns about why the Director of Community Events (Helme) was now in the position of the Compliance Officer. The conversation and contents of that meeting led to the aforementioned Facebook conversation, which appears to have taken place on July 1, 2020.

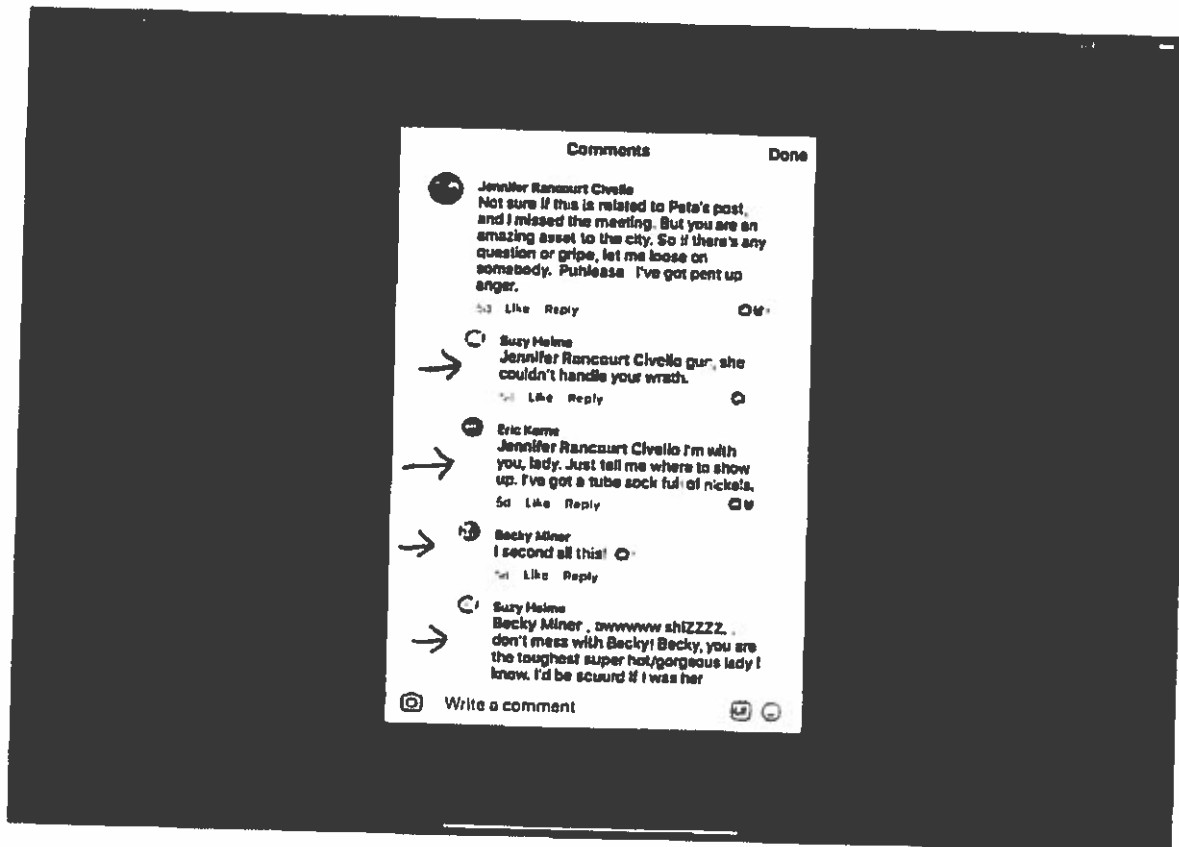
- The relevant section of conversation starts with this image from Eric Kerns: A picture of what looks like a barbarian stating, "And my axe!"

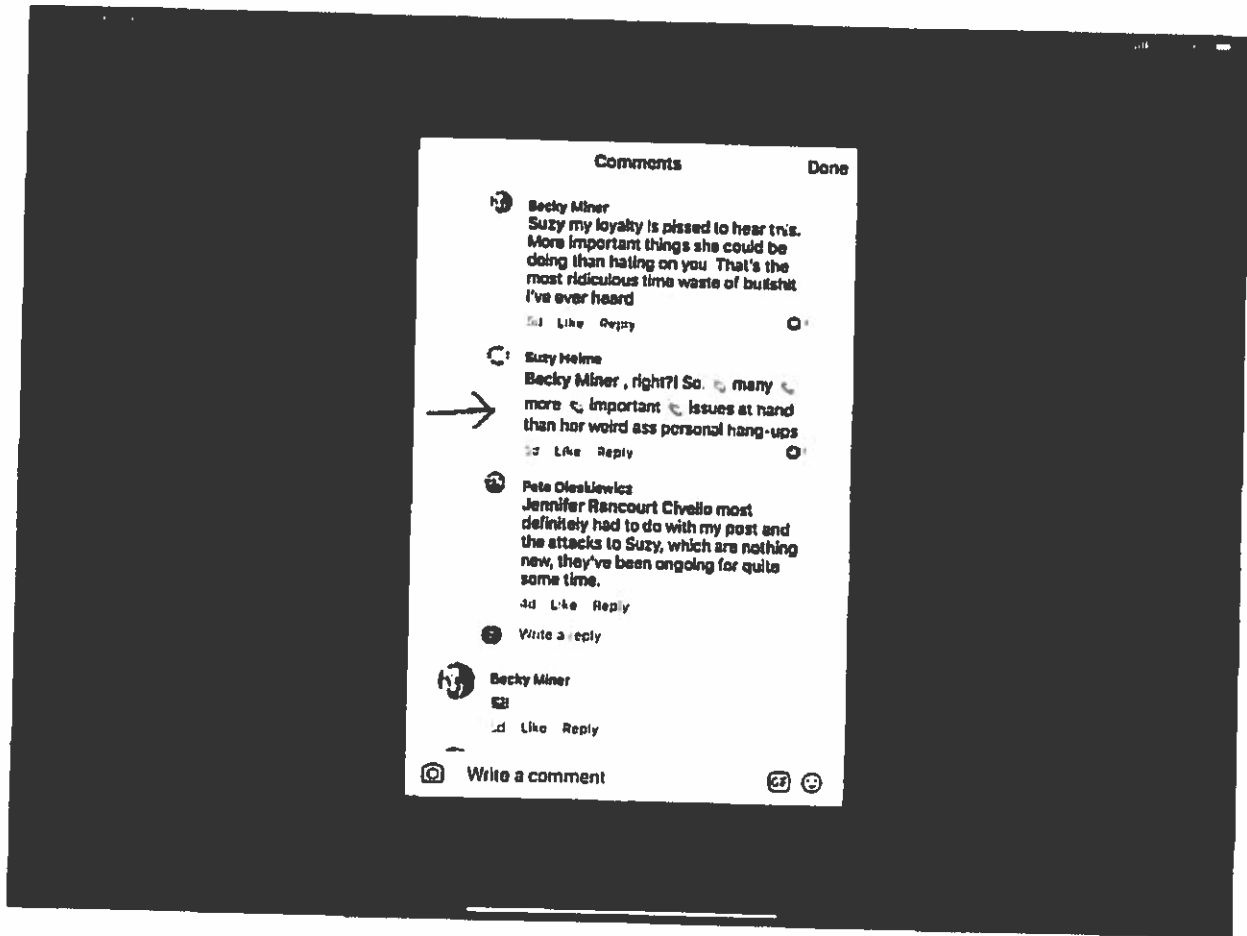


- Jennifer Rancourt Civello to Suzy Helme:
Not sure if this is related to pete's post, and I missed the meeting. But you are an amazing asset to the city. So if there's any question or gripe, let me loose on somebody. Puhlease. I've got pent up anger.
- Susan Helme reply to Jennifer Rancourt Civello:
Gurl, she couldn't handle your wrath.
- Eric Kerns to Jennifer Rancourt Civello:
I'm with you, lady. Just tell me where to show up. I've got a tube sock full of nickels.
- Rebecca Miner comment:
I second all this!
- Susan Helme to Rebecca Miner:
, awwwww shiZZZZ... don't mess with Becky! Becky, you are the toughest super hot / gorgeous lady I know. I'd be scurd if I was her.

- Rebecca Miner to Susan Helme:
My loyalty is pissed to hear this. More important things she could be doing than hating on you. That's the most ridiculous time waste of bullshit I've ever heard.
- Susan Helme to Rebecca Miner
, right? So. (clapping hands icon) So. (clapping hands icon) many (clapping hands icon) more (clapping hands icon) important (clapping hands icon) issues at hand than her weird personal hang-ups.
- Pete Oleskiewicz to Jennifer Civello Rancourt:
Most definitely had to do with my post and the attacks to Suzy, which are nothing new, they've been ongoing for quite some time.
- Rebecca Miner comment:
(Smiley face icon)

❖ See below for actual screenshots from Facebook.





As a result of the conversation that had taken place, Harpin is now fearful for her safety. Harpin expressed to me that she is now reluctant to leave the safety of her home to participate in her day to day activities, this would include going to City Hall for business.

I have advised Harpin I would document the information provided and forward my completed report to the Mayor's Office.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason R. Wood". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Jason R. Wood
Chief of Police

MARIE HARPIN, NORTH ADAMS CITY COUNCILOR

PO Box 222 | (413)652-7381 | mharpin@northadams-ma.gov

July 9, 2020

Jason R Wood, Chief of Police
North Adams Police Department
11 Summer St
North Adams MA, 01247

Dear Chief Wood,

Thank you for the time to meet with me on Monday, July 6, 2020 at 10:00 as scheduled the day prior (Sunday, July 5).

I've read the police report you sent me but I notice several items of our conversation missing, along with detailed information of Eric Kerns in the report similar to details provided for Susan Helme, Jennifer Rancourt Civello, and Rebecca Miner.

The report indicated you were unable to find information on Eric Kerns, however in our conversation on Sunday, July 5th, you told me you knew all involved and none of them would carry out the threat. Since it's widely known Eric Kerns is owner of Bright Ideas Brewery at MassMoca and partner at the Tourist Hotel, I attached the linked information provided on their website. <https://brightideasbrewing.com/about> Here you will find information to locate the details to report appropriately.

During our discussion, issues I specifically indicated but are not in the police report include:

1. Over the holiday weekend I stayed close to home due to being told about threats against me on Facebook Suzy Helme's public post indicating her dislike of me and my recent Council decision. During the 4th of July holiday weekend I had planned on attending an event for the NAACP at MassMoca but was afraid of what would happen to me if I attended due to the fact that Suzy Helme is a MassMoca Foundation Board Trustee and Eric Kerns owns Bright Ideas Brewery located within the MassMoca gates. This event was Sunday, July 5th and I did not attend.
2. On Sunday, July 5th my son, Nathan, saw the threats against me on Suzy Helme's Facebook public post and was shocked, and afraid for me. He attended a picnic during the afternoon and called me from there to make sure I was okay and indicated to me to stay home, don't go anywhere, don't even take the dog for a walk as he was afraid of what would happen to me. He was mostly concerned with threats from Rebecca Miner, who owned a gym and was a boxing instructor and the gang-like style of the discussion.
3. Our discussion included my recognition that as a public official it's expected you will make decisions that are not popular and people will be upset and talk poorly of you. However, the threats are not something I ever expected or a reason I ran for public office. Who would ever run for office in North Adams if you can make an unpopular

decision, get threatened for the decision by a constituent and receive no accountability?

4. I'm baffled how this became personal, as a city councilor and chair of finance committee I often voice a divergent view that's not always uniformly shared. I thought this was my job as an elected official to speak up when the issue requires it to represent ALL citizens, not just those with political/business connections. I find it shocking that representing my constituents would lead to threats of violence.
5. The threats also included support from the President of the City Council, Paul Hopkins and the Superintendent of Schools, Barbara Malkas (by each clicking like). The head of a school system affirming support of intimidation and bullying. Two senior officials in the city condoning threats which could influence others to do the same towards me, it's appalling.

All the above we discussed in your office on Monday, July 6.

Sincerely,

Marie Harpin, North Adams City Councilor