

R-11
4/13/21

RESOLUTION NO. 6693, 2021

Introduced by Councilmembers Days, Dunaway and Clancy

R E S O L U T I O N

WHEREAS, the St. Louis County Council is taking the extraordinary measure to bring forth serious concerns of mismanagement within the St. Louis County Police Department under the leadership of Chief Mary Barton; and

WHEREAS, throughout the nation police chiefs are expected to adhere to and enhance, as necessary, the policies and protocols in the departments they serve; and

WHEREAS, from the beginning of her service as Chief, Mary Barton has fumbled her way through the position of chief with a blatant disregard for normal behavior in a community that has been torn apart due to racial tension, economic inequity, and overall mistrust of police officers and a lack of community engagement to build bridges; and

WHEREAS, in June of 2020, Chief Barton stated the existence of "systemic racism in the police department is overly broad and probably not accurate"; and

WHEREAS, in January, 2021, after it was revealed that Chief Barton's brother-in-law, Mark Peeler, used an expletive and a racial slur on an open police dispatcher microphone to describe a predominantly African American community seeking police service, the Chief chose to chastise the director of the diversity unit of the Police Department for publicly speaking out against the use of racial slurs; and

WHEREAS, adding to the declining culture and environment in the Police Department, St. Louis County employees of color were traumatized and dismayed when Mark Peeler was praised and celebrated for his years of service in a countywide email, and receiving a full pension without corrective action or penalty under the leadership of Chief Barton; and

WHEREAS, under Chief Barton's leadership, she had the opportunity to employ what this Council deems to be a fully qualified human resource director and assistant and instead retained a human resource director without corresponding

qualifications or experience that this Council finds appropriate for the position and who reportedly serves as a key source of a hostile work environment within the St. Louis County Police Department; and

WHEREAS, Chief Barton continues to employ an intermittent employee who, it has been argued, was directly responsible for falsified documents that resulted in a 1994 25-year imprisonment of Lamar Johnson, and is currently conducting background investigations of potential Police Department employees, including minority police recruits; and

WHEREAS, under Chief Barton's leadership there is an absence of a communication database system to track correspondence to residents in the evidence notification process; and

WHEREAS, Chief Barton has been slow to update the operational procedures of evidence, including the retention and disposal of evidence; and

WHEREAS, in March, 2021, after public outcry and anguish among St. Louis County residents, and ten months after her "systemic racism" statement quoted above, Chief Barton admitted that racism does exist "and that people suffer trauma as a direct result of experiencing" racism; and

WHEREAS, as one of the current members of the Board of Managers of the County and Municipal Police Academy (CMPA), Chief Barton has the distinguished opportunity to create policies that proactively address behaviors that hinder the progress and success of potential minority recruits; and

WHEREAS, this County Council believes the practice of institutional racism and discrimination includes retaliatory behavior; and

WHEREAS, Chief Barton's practice of transferring St. Louis County officers to different divisions within the department has caught the attention of the public, and thus leads the public and this Council to question whether Chief Barton has the skill set to move forward an unbiased program within the St. Louis County Police Department that is supportive to the health, treatment and success of all African American police officers; and

WHEREAS, this moment in history demands a transformational leader capable of earning the trust of the community she serves, and Chief Barton has yet to demonstrate the bandwidth to do so;

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The County Council expresses its lack of confidence in Chief Mary Barton, finding it is a necessary public exercise to communicate its opinion that Chief Barton is incapable of guiding the St. Louis County Police Department in the right direction, and, therefore, the faith and trust bestowed unto her is fractured and unrecoverable.

SECTION 2. The County Council strongly recommends the Board of Police Commissioners hold Chief Barton accountable for the policies, procedures and practices that have crippled the department.

SECTION 3. The Administrative Director shall send certified copies of this Resolution to Chief Barton, the Board of Police Commissioners and the Honorable Sam Page, County Executive.

ADOPTED: April 13, 2021

RITA HEARD DAYS
CHAIR, COUNTY COUNCIL

ATTEST: DIANN L. VALENTI
ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM:

BETH ORWICK
COUNTY COUNSELOR