

Public Records Request #4179

The following materials have been gathered in response to public records request #4179. These materials include:

- Email
- Black Lives Matter Document

This information was provided as a response to a public records request on 9/16/20 and is current to that date. There is a possibility of more current information and/or documents related to the stated subject matter.

Further Information

For further information about this request or the Citywide Records Program, please contact:

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From: "Burkarth, Cory" <Cory.Burkarth@ci.charlotte.nc.us>

Date: September 15, 2020 at 4:52:00 PM EDT

To: "Latos, Allison" <allison.latos@wsoc-tv.com>

Subject: FW: [EXT] Fire Department Chief Removal

Allison –

Below is the email that you requested along with a statement from Chief Johnson:

This is from Chief Johnson: “We recognize that we are facing some very difficult times and much of it is related to social matters about the country’s legal system and subjects of systemic racism. As an apolitical body of first responders, Charlotte Fire Department must take a systematic approach in how its members express themselves regarding political affiliation and social platforms. There is a process to change the CFD uniform and any employee who wishes to alter the uniform in anyway, should follow the process to request a uniform change. Our mission is to provide life-saving care and property conservation to the citizens of Charlotte no matter the citizen's ethnicity, religion, orientation, or disability.”

From: corine mack <cmacknaacp@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, September 14, 2020 10:19 AM

To: Johnson, Renee' <Renee.Johnson@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Ajmera, Dimple <Dimple.Ajmera@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Mitchell, James <James.Mitchell@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Watlington, Victoria <Victoria.Watlington@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Newton, Matthew <Matt.Newton@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Graham, Malcolm <Malcolm.Graham@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Egleston, Larken <Larken.Egleston@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Bokhari, Tariq <Tariq.Bokhari@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Eiselt, Julie <Julie.Eiselt@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Lyles, Viola <vylyes@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Winston, Braxton <Braxton.Winston@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Driggs, Edmund <edriggs@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Baker, Patrick <Patrick.Baker@ci.charlotte.nc.us>; Jones, Marcus <Marcus.Jones@ci.charlotte.nc.us>

Subject: [EXT] Fire Department Chief Removal

EXTERNAL EMAIL: This email originated from the Internet. Do not click any images, links or open any attachments unless you recognize and trust the sender and know the content is safe. Please click the Phish Alert button to forward the email to Bad.Mail.

Hello,

The NAACP Charlotte-Mecklenburg Branch has been asked to advocate on behalf of Black and Brown city employees.

Charlotte Fire Department Chief, Reggie Johnson was present and allowed a party at the training academy with no mask or social distancing. There is also evidence the academy was properly disinfected after the already dangerous incident.

His actions is indicative of his blatant disregard for authority, policies or the life of our citizens and firefighters.

He shows no respect for the city council or city manager.

The continual complaints, lawsuits and cases from POC in the department rises mostly because of Chief Johnson's defiance to directives given to him and the HR taskforce.

As we uplift Black lives in this country and in the city of Charlotte, Chief Johnson's constant disregard for Black lives is deplorable.

The recent case regarding harassment of a Black firefighter for wearing a BLM helmet is unacceptable and again indicative of his insensitivity, disrespect and inability to lead.

The BLM mural in uptown Charlotte and public praise of the mural from councilmembers should have given Chief Johnson a clear understanding of how to treat Black and Brown employees. It did not!

We are calling for his removal.

The few Black and Brown people who have been employed by the Charlotte Fire Department should not endure bias, bigotry or racism in their workplace. Especially when the head happens to be Black.

Sadly, revolting enslave men and women dealt with slaves who would tell their slave masters of their plans to escape hundreds of years ago. Chief Johnson is no different.

I am sure initially the employees of color believed having a Black Chief would facilitate change. Unfortunately, things are worse.

Again, The NAACP Charlotte-Mecklenburg Branch is calling for Chief Reggie Johnson's termination.

Please see the attached supporting document.

Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

Thank you,

Rev. Corine Mack, President
NAACP Charlotte- Mecklenburg Branch

CmacknaACP@gmail.com

Cell:347-683-0264

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/07/17/black-lives-matter-isnt-partisan-political-federal-agency-says/5452397002/>

Expressing support for the "Black Lives Matter" movement isn't political or partisan, an independent federal agency has said in an opinion addressing questions from federal employees on the topic.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel cleared the way for federal employees to support the Black Lives Matter movement and the Black Lives Matter Global Network while on duty, including wearing or displaying materials related to the cause, according to an advisory opinion obtained by USA TODAY. The opinion was first issued July 10 and updated Tuesday.

The agency reached its opinion because the Black Lives Matter movement concerns itself with issues such as racism, which are not inherently aligned with a single political party. And the prominent Black Lives Matter Global Network did not meet any criteria for a "partisan political group," in part because the group says it will fight against officials from both parties who do not share its beliefs.

"An employee is not prohibited by the Hatch Act from expressing support for, or opposition to, the BLM movement while on duty or in the workplace. But the employee may not say, for example, 'if you believe that Black Lives Matter, then you should vote for/against X in November,' " the advisory opinion says.

<https://www.wbtv.com/2020/06/09/black-lives-matter-mural-being-painted-uptown-charlotte-street/>

"The City of Charlotte and Charlotte Center City Partners are encouraged by the community's response to the Black Lives Matter mural, but ask that pedestrians in the area follow social distancing guidelines and be aware of traffic as they travel to and from the mural," City of Charlotte tweeted. "The city and its partners will continue to collaborate on additional ways the community can experience this impactful public art installation.

<https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/article244108702.html>

"The Black Lives Matter mural represents visual support of the lives of African Americans each and every day," City Council member Malcolm Graham told the Observer Thursday. "It demonstrates we are a progressive city that understands the value of all lives, in general, and specifically Black lives as it relates to what's happening across the country with the levels of racism and racist activity."

"It was a beautiful expression of our values and the community has really connected with it," City Council member Larken Egleston said of the mural. "But at no point did anyone think that was going to

take the place of the actual work to improve our policies or improve the way our local government and law enforcement works — and how we seek equality and justice for the people in our community.”

” Imagine for a few minutes that we can ‘art-ify’ the intersection of Trade and Tryon with ‘Black Lives Matter!’” Jaiyeoba had tweeted last month when musing over the mural concept, after seeing the Black Lives Matter mural painted in Washington, D.C.

“It becomes, in my mind, a healing symbol,” Jaiyeoba told the Observer. “That’s the spirit of our city — being able to embrace something new, something different.”

- Taiwo Jaiyeoba City Planning Director

