



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

May 26, 2023

Dustin Jones  
5001 Hunters Path Court  
Greensboro, NC 27409  
VIA Email to: [dustinj00@aol.com](mailto:dustinj00@aol.com)

Dear Dustin:

I received your appeal of dismissal request dated May 18, 2023. I am writing to respond to your appeal of dismissal from employment. On appeal, I am tasked with the responsibility of reviewing the record in this matter. My decision is based on review of the following: your history in the Fire Department; screenshots of what was posted on your Facebook page (social media); the Fire Department's Directives on Social Media and supervisor conduct; and the numerous feedback and coaching sessions provided to you by your Fire Department Leadership concerning your social media posts. Based on my review, I am upholding the Fire Department's decision to dismiss you from employment.

On appeal you state that you proudly served in the United States Navy with people of many different backgrounds. In addition, you are active in volunteer efforts. You have even opened your home to foster children of a different background from you. I sincerely thank you for these acts of service to our country and our community. My review and decision in no way undermines that service.

Captains serve a critical role in fostering and maintaining a culture of mutual respect in our organization. They have the responsibility of holding their team members accountable for failures to meet this expectation. Just as significantly, leaders are also expected to model respect for others. I find that your dismissal was appropriate because your misuse of social media and disrespectful treatment of others continued despite repeated coaching sessions and opportunities to improve. You were either unable or unwilling to meet the expectations the City of Greensboro has of its leaders.

In 2021, you responded to a structure fire. While there, you took pictures showing hoarding conditions and posted those pictures on a social media platform. You were coached by your

leadership team. You offered that your intention was to not disrespect others. You were directed to review the Fire Department's Social Media Directive and to speak to your team members about the Directive. You signed the coaching document acknowledging that "...if you engage in any misconduct or your duty performance becomes unsatisfactory, you may be subject to further corrective action."

In 2022, the City received an anonymous report to its ethics hotline raising concerns about one of your social media posts. Someone had posted a video of the Guilford County Sheriff participating in North Carolina A&T State University's homecoming parade. You commented "[t]his is the clown in charge of keeping you safe. Freaking Joke." In a comment attached to a separate post about the Sheriff's participation in the parade you stated "I can't reply. I might get my hand smacked." Your subsequent comments on the surface seemed to reveal an awareness of your responsibility to be respectful of others. However, the smiling face emoji you posted alongside of those comments appeared to make light of this responsibility.

Fire leadership met with you in November 2022 about this incident. You were reminded again of your responsibilities surrounding social media. In particular, you were instructed that all employees must uphold the Fire Department's value of respect for an individual and avoid making disrespectful statements about employees, residents, other agencies, etc. Your leadership admonished you to go back to the station and study the Fire Department's Social Media Directive. You were cautioned that they did not want to see similar behavior from you in the future. You conceded that your behavior was wrong and that you should not have made the post.

On February 7, 2023 Fire leadership met with you about yet another disruptive post made to your social media account regarding the killing of Tyre Nichols. Rather than take this coaching to heart you appear to have grown defiant. In the aftermath of that meeting you posted "[t]o those watching me...keep watching..."

In the weeks following, several more of your posts or re-posts came to the attention of your leadership team. These posts contained the language as outlined below and attached.

1. If I ever offended you, I'm sorry...that you're a little bitch.
2. Straight Pride, it's natural, it's worked for thousands of years and you can make babies
3. If this is a woman [captioned to a picture of Rachel Levine], this is a fishing pole [captioned to a picture of an assault rifle].
4. You know what's insane...A white person can paint their face black and be accused of being a racist. Yet a man can dress as a woman and be called a hero...[shrug emoji].
5. ...I identify as invisible. I'm TRANSPARENT...My pronouns are who/where?

The net effect of these posts is to dehumanize, delegitimize, disparage and disrespect those who are different from you. Organizational culture is defined in large part by what behaviors are tolerated. We simply cannot tolerate this type of behavior from a leader of this organization.

You claim that there are others who have engaged in similar behavior on social media, but were not dismissed from employment. I questioned Fire leadership about these other cases. I learned that there have been other troubling social media posts from Fire employees. However, those employees received coaching and actually changed their behavior. As I noted earlier, your disrespectful behavior continued despite repeated coaching sessions and reminders.

You self-identify as a member of the Greensboro Fire Department on your social media account as a result of your numerous photos in the assigned uniform. As a supervisor you were a representative of the City. Statements by a supervisor that have the effect of disparaging and disrespecting team members, some of whom are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, interfere with the City's interest in maintaining an efficient operation. For all of these reasons I am upholding your dismissal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Taiwo Jaiyeoba". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Taiwo Jaiyeoba  
City Manager

Att.: Facebook posts  
cc: Personnel file of Dustin Jones