

August 19th, 2020

To: Mayor Muldoon, Town Council Members, County Commissioners & Interim Police Chief Weber

Re: 8/13/20 Jackson Police Department's Facebook Police Blotter statement regarding sexual assault of a minor & subsequent JPD apology (screenshots attached)

A recent blotter entry referenced the sexual assault of a child in a flippant and disrespectful way. While the offensive "jokes" have been removed, the entry still places the responsibility for the incident on her shoulders and remains online. **JPD's apology fails to acknowledge the depth to which the original post is harmful to both the victim and community survivors of sexual assault.**

The apology states that the blotter exists to "provide transparency to what is happening in our community." In reality it serves as a way for law enforcement to ridicule citizens who find themselves in trouble, and to make light of serious and dangerous situations. It is nothing more than a gossip column and is just as cruel as the discontinued Inmate List. This particular entry showcases the misogyny and disregard of alleged sexual abuse within JPD.

Several of us have come to the work of creating alternatives to policing after personal experiences with law enforcement's mishandling of sexual assault and/or domestic abuse. While we focus our criticism on the system of policing and dismantling its harmful outcomes, we demand accountability from those currently tasked with community safety, **especially when their mistreatment of power directly makes the community less safe.** We have repeatedly been told by some of our public officials, including former Chief Todd Smith, and Sheriff Matt Carr - that it doesn't happen here. We have been assured that our local officers are "the good guys." However, many members of our community have personal stories to the contrary.

Interim Police Chief Weber, we demand accountability in your department, including but not limited to:

- Staff wide accountability actions as a result of this blotter entry
- Breach of public trust addressed
- End of publishing the self-aggrandizing police blotter: while this is one specific event, it is indicative of a culture

Elected officials, we demand accountability including but not limited to:

- Inquiry into how our community and law enforcement in particular treats sexual assault
- Public assurance that incidents like this one are being handled as appropriately, sensitively, and professionally as possible

This serves as an opportunity to practice transformative justice over punitive justice. We do not believe a simple firing or canceling of those that cause harm to be productive forms of healing. **This incident should not be seen as a mistake, but rather the outcome of a culture that finds this behavior funny and acceptable.** The work must focus on changing that culture rather than using an individual as a scapegoat. Accountability does not involve a further breach of the minor's privacy, but centers the multiple forms of harm they, and countless community members like them, have faced.

Our community has a right to physical and mental safety when seeking help for sexual assault and domestic abuse, regardless of age or gender. Until we create a world with life-affirming institutions, we intend to hold our current institutions to account.

-Act Now JH

Send to Emily Mieure at courts@jhnewsandguide.com (or BCC her in the email to local gov)