

Hopewell Boro Board of Fire Commissioners
Hopewell Twp. Board of Fire Commissioners
Chief of Police, Hopewell Twp.

Re: Whistleblower Complaint against Hopewell Fire Dept. Chief Dan Galatro

Date: January 14, 2023

This complaint is being submitted under the Conscientious Employee Protection Act.
"Whistleblower Act".

The complaint will outline specific acts of malfeasance by Dan Galatro, Chief, Hopewell Fire Department. Chief Galatro is operating in a manner that is incompatible with a clear mandate of public policy concerning the public's health, safety, or welfare or protection of the environment.

Specific acts of malfeasance include destruction of records, evidence tampering, fraud, gross negligence, harassment and defamation, medical non-compliance, lying to public officials, misconduct, theft, witness intimidation and tampering.

These allegations are real. He has committed numerous acts that disqualify him as a Chief officer.

Destruction of Records

October 19, 2021 – Then-Deputy Chief Galatro committed official misconduct by defacing two HFD fire call run sheets. With malice, Chief Galatro scratched Christopher Myers signatures off the referenced sheets. The call sheets are legal documents. They serve to validate member eligibility of LOSAP requirements and for certain N.J. Fireman's Relief Association benefits.

Gross Negligence

April 2022

Chief Galatro was notified that the exhaust hose in the first bay at the firehouse was broken. This allows for toxic diesel fumes to fill the firehouse bays. After nine months, the issue was corrected despite multiple requests by members and HVES staff.

May 2022 – Quint 52's leveler ball was observed to be broken. This ensures the operator of the ladder knows the operational balancing limits when using the ladder. Chief Galatro was notified immediately of this must fix item. Despite notification, Chief Galatro did not address this substantial safety issue until December 2022.

June 2022 – Chief Galatro was notified of Tanker 52's VHF radio antenna being broken. He stated it did not need to be repaired because "we don't use VHF no [sic] more." Every fire department and EMS agency in Mercer County uses VHF for dispatch and other special operations.

Theft, Lying to Public Officials

November 9, 2022 – Chief Galatro reported to the Boro Fire Commissioners at an open public meeting that he "donated" an unknown number of VHF Motorola HT-1250 portable radios because "we don't use them no [sic] more" and "they don't work." He alleged to have donated them to a fire department in Tennessee. Chief Galatro then declared the Tennessee department "loves the radios." If the radios did not function, why would the department "love" them?

Chief Galatro gave the radios to his father who is a security officer. The radios had received a public offer of over \$500 to be paid to the HFD but Chief Galatro decided, on his own, that he would give the radios to his father.

At the same Boro of Fire Commissioner meeting, Chief Galatro reported that the fire department was set to respond to "400-500" calls in 2022. This wide figure grossly overstated the number of actual responses the Hopewell Fire Department handled in 2022. Total responses in 2022 was 350.

Additionally, Chief Galatro stated, "Joey [Novak] and I are working off the record on replacing the old Engine." Chairman Sky Morehouse immediately corrected Chief Galatro by reminding Chief Galatro that this was an open public meeting. There would be no "off the record" fire truck purchase planning or funding.

Evidence Tampering, Gross Negligence, Witness Tampering

December 16, 2022 - Chief Galatro failed to park his HFD issued Chief's vehicle which resulted in Deputy Chief Tim Fenton being struck and temporarily pinned to Fenton's vehicle's rear bumper. Deputy Chief Fenton was transported to the local trauma center as a result of Chief Galatro's mistake.

Gross Negligence – Chief Galatro did not immediately request EMS assistance and instead advised on-scene crews that he was "dealing with a situation."

Instead of helping Deputy Chief Fenton, Chief Galatro told witnesses "I have to run the call" and walked away from Chief Bill Springer who was the EMT assisting a trauma patient.

Galatro made numerous statements regarding his Chief's vehicle "jumping out of gear" and stated he put the vehicle "in Park" and it shifted from Park to Drive on its own.

Once back at the firehouse, Chief Galatro engaged in witness tampering by ordering no one to write anything about the "situation" in the call's fire report.

Chief Galatro told no one of the incident. He did not discuss the incident with any officers for at least one week.

Chief Galatro did not place his Chief's vehicle out-of-service for inspection. He did not take the vehicle to the dealership for a thorough review. The vehicle should be placed out of service immediately until such time as it is deemed safe. For reasons unknown, the Hopewell Twp. Police took no action in securing the vehicle as evidence.

Chief Galatro deleted the dashboard / driver camera which would possibly have captured the incident.

Chief Galatro continues to maintain the lie that his vehicle jumped out of gear: from park, to reverse, to neutral, and ended up in drive.

Gross Misconduct

December 17, 2022 – During Operation Santa, while driving Rescue 52 and being stopped behind a man on a bicycle, Chief Galatro yelled, "I fucking hate people on bicycles...I'll run this mother fucker over!" The statement was made in the presence of two junior members and multiple officers of the HFD. Chief Galatro made this declaration just over 30 hours after Deputy Chief Fenton was almost killed by Chief Galatro's gross negligence.

Harassment

2021 – 2023 – For the past two years, Chief Galatro has repeatedly slandered and harassed Chief Will Mullen covering all aspects of the department. For every problem discussed at the HFD, Chief Galatro immediately assigns blame on Chief Mullen. Vehicles, budget, computer and IT systems, calls responses, members, the list is endless.

Despite being told to stop harassing Chief Mullen, the slander and defamation continues to this day.

May 22, 2022 – Chief Galatro repeatedly slandered EMU Lieutenant Susan Conover by accusing her of money laundering and bank fraud. His slanderous and unfounded accusations were based on department-approved EMS week activities at the Hopewell Fire Department.

Chief Galatro has created and fostered a persistent hostile environment at the Hopewell Fire Department. This has adversely impacted the department's volunteer moral and reduced its ability to operate.

Medical Non-Compliance

Medical Clearance - Chief Galatro refuses to produce documentation regarding his Fitness for Duty to be a firefighter in light of a significant stroke he suffered in 2018.

His mental abilities have deteriorated significantly over the past three years. Is he medically cleared to lead a Fire Department?

Conclusion - Both Fire Commissioner Boards should *immediately* launch an investigation into the above allegations and suspend Chief Galatro of his duties pending a completed internal investigation and review of his cleared medical status.

Chief Galatro has proven to be a compulsive liar, bully, and alleged thief.

Chief Galatro is a threat to himself, the community, and the Hopewell Fire Department. Allowing him to continue to perform his statutory duties exposes everyone to extreme liability and danger.
