

May 13, 2023

Robert Bentz
21 Ocean Drive
Jupiter Inlet Colony, FL 33469

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of Jim Matthews. I have been a full time resident of the colony for the past 23 years. During that time, I have had the opportunity to interact with many qualified police officers. I find Captain Matthews to be one of the best officers that have served our community. I consider myself to have been apolitical in the past and have not interfered with the administrative decisions taken by the mayor nor the city commissioners. However, I now find it very necessary to voice my concerns with the current selection process that is unfolding.

Captain Matthews has loyally served the community for over 10 years. I have found him to be extremely professional in his interactions with the public while also friendly and engaging. He is able to address issues and quickly resolve them without conflict. I was appalled by the mayor's decision to terminate his employment after his incredible service to our community. To claim "insubordination" from someone who was simply expressing his desire to obtain a position he is clearly qualified for and deserves makes little sense. I remember when John Pruitt was hired as an officer and how over time was promoted through the ranks, a process with continuity and fairness. The same process is appropriate now. I think if we had no other option than reaching out to other communities, we should reach out to communities such as Jupiter Island, Palm Beach or Manalapan. Those that resemble our community for candidates and would be more appropriate than Riviera Beach, considering our policing requirements are vastly different.

I have done a preliminary Google search of Officer Freeman which finds several "red flags" regarding his character and temperament, which brings into question why was he hired in the first place and also promoted to Vice Chief. This entire process is dubious.

The selection committee needs to reverse the decision to terminate Captain Matthews and follow our historical precedent of hiring known qualified candidates from within. The actions taken to date have had a polarizing effect on our community, which was not necessary nor helpful.

Respectfully,

Dr. Robert Bentz
Lisa Bentz

