

**From:** [Dan M. Brown](#)  
**To:** [Police Chief Search](#)  
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Mary Schauf and City of Madison Police and Fire Commission:

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide comments. I would first like to state that I have the utmost respect for the job that law enforcement is expected to carry out. This does not suggest that I believe *all* officers are necessarily honorable and/or respectable. But there is a sense that most have a more idealistic understanding of the community's expectations and that they comport themselves accordingly. It should be noted that I am not a law enforcement professional nor am I a mental health professional.

I believe the selected Chief of Police should bring a vision to the department that merges with the ever-changing demographics and needs of the community. He should have the ability to effectively articulate that vision and have a plan to effectively impart it onto the entire department, bringing about a complete cultural shift in the department's law enforcement approach.

The new Chief should have a plan for assisting officers on a consistent basis. The good and clearheaded mental health of these individuals is vital to their protection and that of the community. Law enforcement would appear a rather "macho" profession whose members may tend to eschew mental health assistance for fear of appearing "weak" to their peers. This, of course, is nonsense. In the course of their day-to-day activities, they respond to heightened issues that have risen to the point where the affected parties felt the need for assistance. When one encounters these sorts of situations on a regular basis, it may be reasonable to assume they view daily life through a prism where everyone is a potential "bad guy." This is not healthy, and it is potentially dangerous. I believe the new chief needs to prioritize an ongoing officer mental health regiment. And not some routine perfunctory Q & A session with a bureaucrat who checks boxes; but a regiment of mental health sessions from a seasoned and genuinely committed professional(s) whose charge it is to assist the officers in their mental well-being. The next chief would do well to have this professional(s) to also assist in identifying anomalies that are perhaps red flags that require more intense scrutiny of an officer's behavior. This type of counseling could ideally also provide for a broader and more meaningful understanding of one's fellow man when having to respond to various calls.

The new Chief should continue to develop genuinely close relationships to mental health and social services divisions in the community with a goal of helpful partnerships for his officers. By better understanding the contemporary human condition as well as getting to know various "problem-children" or potential "problem children" in the community, perhaps fear of "the other" may be mitigated when there are encounters.

Hopefully, the new Chief will seek to de-militarize law enforcement. While I have tremendous respect for those who have served in the armed forces in this country, hiring combat-tested veterans seems counterintuitive to maintaining a safe community. More often than not, where the

US military has had armed conflicts, they are against non-white combatants. Arguably, only sociopaths might walk away from killing or maiming a fellow human being without being profoundly affected. As such, we might assume that combat veterans have been disturbed by having had to carry out the duty of taking a life or lives. I ask rhetorically, is this what we want to have patrolling our ever-shifting demographics in this community? And truly with all due respect to veterans, it may be time to turn the page on the practice of seeking out military people for law enforcement.

None of the above is to suggest that the incoming Chief of Police should require his officers to wear daisies on their breast pockets. There is a time and place for forceful action. But with a Police Chief that grasps the importance of strong mental health among his staff, a more meaningful relationship might be developed between law enforcement and the community where there is trust and mutual respect. Defund the Police is a terrible and misguided slogan. Redirecting resources and attention to more substantive issues appears a more productive and practical approach; one that I hope the new Chief brings about.

Thank-you for the opportunity to make a comment, and the very best to those who are asked to make this important decision.

- Daniel Brown  
Executive Manager – Ho-Chunk Gaming Madison