

Last modified: Friday, October 19, 2007 6:45 PM EDT

PBA votes no confidence in township administrator

By Jackeline Leon, Staff Writer

UNION, NJ - Once again tempers are flaring over disputes between township officials and the local police unions and this time, the local union has declared a vote of "no confidence" in the ability of Business Administrator Frank Bradley.

In an advertisement in the Union Leader, the Policemen's Benevolent Association Local 69, Superior Officers Association 69 and Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 35 suggest that Bradley has "made every effort to enact policy and persuade the Township Committee to make decisions that are solely designed for busting organized labor unions representing township employees."

Bradly attributes the animosity between the unions and the township to an incident in which Dougherty and another officer were disciplined for "stealing time."

"I am not surprised by Dougherty's comments," Bradley said in response to the allegations made by the unions and the PBA president. "The relationship between the township and police unions deteriorated when PBA President Dougherty and former SOA President William Jones were disciplined for stealing time. Lt. Jones, who was the supervisor in charge of the night shift, was leaving work early on a regular basis and allowing other officers on his shift to also leave early."

Fellow administrators support Bradley despite insistence by the PBA to terminate him.

"Bradley has done an outstanding job efficiently running this Township," said Mayor Brenda Restivo, whose seat on the Township Committee expires this year. "He's a major reason why Union remains a very desirable place to live and work. One of Bradley's major initiatives has been to introduce a new policing program which increases the accountability of police officers and patrol efforts which reduce nuisance crimes and improve the quality of life of our residents."

Restivo suggested that the PBA has spoken against usage of the COMSTAT program which has been credited with maintaining low crime rates in the township.

"The police unions will not dictate policy to this township. Senior officers are earning an excess of \$90,000 per year and should embrace any effort that will benefit our public," Restivo said.

Officers within the Union Police Department suggest that they are not against the program and that they are willing to comply with the township in safeguarding the public.

PBA attorney Timothy Smith, who has been involved in labor management relations cases for several years, insists that this is the worst case of abuse of power and public corruption he's seen.

"Up until the vote of no confidence was publicized, the township has acknowledged

this was one of the premier police departments in the state," Smith said.

Smith suggests that the township's statements that the Police Department is unwilling to utilize the COMSTAT program is unfounded.

"The police officers understand their mission to enforce and obey laws and problems between the PBA and the township all began before COMSTAT was ever even used because of the Jobs in Blue issues and other matters," Smith said.

Smith said that before issues arose regarding the vote of no confidence, as well as several summonses that were allegedly given to the business administrator, the township has been showering accolades upon the department.

Smith confirmed that Bradley was issued a total of six summons for driving an unregistered vehicle in a careless manner, affixing lights and sirens to the vehicle, illegally permeating a police barricade and illegally entering a fire scene last week.

"We intend on filing a complaint to limit the business administrator who has been acting like a police officer when he has no authorization to do so," Smith explained.

Bradley stated that the PBA has been unwilling to allow monitoring to prevent officers from "stealing time."

"The PBA leadership has also been upset with sick leave monitoring and injury a leave monitoring programs that were recently introduced to reduce the amount of excessive sick time used by police officers. My responsibility is not to Dave Dougherty or the PBA, but to the 55,000 residents of this town," Bradley said.

However, the PBA has stated that members of their union have been surveilled illegally.

"They have been illegally spying on Union cops and an investigation launched by the Public Employment Relations Commission confirmed that," Smith said.

Smith contends officials within the department were reportedly skipped for promotion because they testified in a Public Employment Relations Commission hearing against Bradley.

Smith stated that personnel files were publically released and that it is believed to have been done as a clear reprisal.

"The very contention that this is a dysfunctional department is in retaliation for the Police Department standing their ground in the face of gestapo tactics," Smith said.

Smith said that another lawyer has filed a complaint for unfair labor practice against the township.

"The township administrator is trying to make the police department his own little palace guard," Smith said. "This is an example of a public official who is not a law enforcement official trying to instill his will."

Jackeline Leon can be reached at 908-686-7700, ext. 126, or