

DOUGLAS P. BERNABEI
Chief of Police



SCOTT J. HARL
Mayor

February 14, 2018

Attorney Julie L. Ajster
Ajster Law Office
P.O. Box 255
Peru, IL 61354

Via e-mail and U.S. Mail

Dear Attorney Ajster:

I am in receipt of a one page typed written statement from yourself, 6 photographs as well as two email communications and all of these items appear to be relevant to PPD CAD number 18-1965.

I have enclosed a courtesy copy of the CAD so you have the benefit of reviewing it that documents you coming to PPD on 02-12-18 to file a complaint relating to allegations you brought forth in your written statement.

The Peru Fire Department, which responds to well over 300 calls annually, employs a department of approximately 80% paid on call firefighters. These paid on call firefighters do not staff the Peru fire station but rather carry pagers and respond to emergency calls from their homes either directly to the scene or to the station depending on monthly squad assignment and nature of the emergency. The station is only manned 24/7 by one of 4 full time firefighter/engineers. This operational plan is in place in part to meet nationally accepted standards for fire response to operate a fire engine in a working fire situation within required staffing. Public and firefighter safety is paramount. For example when the fire department is paged to a house fire or business fire etc. the on duty engineer immediately can leave the station in an engine, does so usually alone and meets a team of firefighters at the scene who can then immediately begin to suppress the fire.

Because of this need to have a certain number of staff arrive at a scene as close to possible as an engine, the Peru Fire Department has long had a sanctioned departmental practice in place that fire fighters are permitted the use of a department pickup truck and plow to clear their personal driveways during or after significant snow events. This allows that firefighters can quickly and safely respond to emergency calls and begin fire suppression immediately. This practice is clearly legal under Illinois law as the use of the plow and truck was an authorized act under Illinois law as well as public policy and practice. Frankly, I cannot phantom how any reasonable person to conclude otherwise.

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PERU, ILLINOIS 61354-3505**

**Email: chiefbernabei@perupolice.org
www.peru.il.us**

EMERGENCY DIAL 911

**Administrative Phone: 815-223-2151
Fax: 815-223-2267**

However, you and others are certainly free to question the merits of this or any other municipal policy or practice and I can assure you that the city staff will review this situation to determine if the practice needs to be tweaked or otherwise revised, made more restrictive or even eliminated.

Please know that as a regular part of our city operation we constantly challenge ourselves to insure we provide the best possible service and employ best practices so insight like yours or other constructive criticism are welcomed as it can often be helpful in reaching that goal.

Finally, in light of your adversarial posture towards many people in local government and recent repeated lawsuits against the city of Peru, others, and myself, I feel it is appropriate to refer you to some other agency for investigation should you still wish pursue this matter. As you also currently have litigation against the Sheriff of LaSalle County, I would encourage you to take this matter to the Illinois State Police to see if they would be willing to take your complaint.

Make no mistake about it, there is no impropriety or legal conflict in this agency handling your complaint or closing this as unfounded, but nonetheless in light of your current adversarial relationship with the city of Peru it is only appropriate to refer you to bring your complaint elsewhere. Again, I do so out of abundance of caution and to be fully transparent in the process. I simply do so to avoid any appearance of impropriety.

If you have further questions or concerns regarding this matter I would suggest you contact the Illinois State Police.

If you have any questions or concerns about any other matter of mutual concern please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Douglas P. Bernabei".

Douglas P. Bernabei
Chief of Police

cc: LaSalle County State's Attorney Karen Donnelly
PPD CAD number 18-1965.