



PRESS STATEMENT

WE ARE TOGETHER.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SELMA, ALABAMA — February 22, 2023

Citizens of Selma, there are two words in management that are important for us to know and understand. Those two words are responsibility and authority. A simple definition of responsibility is “a thing that one is required to do as part of a job.” A simple definition of authority is “a person or organization having power or control to decide in a particular area.” There is a management rule that says whoever has the responsibility to do a job should also have the authority or power to decide how to do that job. In the case of the Selma Police Department, this management rule is broken. It is clear that in SPD the responsibility to provide executive-level management to solve problems and issues is with the mayor and the authority to decide how to do that job is with the city council.

As mayor, I have made several attempts to fix this problem because it is at the core of all the complaints and problems I receive about the police department, and there are many very serious issues. The city council has made clear that it wants to keep the authority to decide how to fix problems within the department. However, for a solution to happen, the responsibility and authority must be in the same place.

Therefore, since the city council insists on holding the authority, then I have decided to share responsibility with city council. Going forward, the city council has both the responsibility and authority to work directly with the Chief of Police to address non-personnel related issues within the police department. All non-personnel related executive management issues and problems involving citizens and resource allocation within the police department should be directed to the city council because only the city council has the authority to fix them. Everything I have done or attempted to do up to this point have been addressing symptoms because only the city council has the authority to solve these problems. I have 1) attempted to purchase a camera system, 2) prevented the misuse of grant funds, 3) provided resources and training to assists with crime investigations to solve murders and slow down the murder rate, 4) waved a bright red flag about the evidence room issues, 5) questioned slow call response, 6) responded to over 50 citizen complaints, etc. These are only symptoms; but, the city council holds the keys to the solution. Those keys are money and the authority to decide.

Citizens be clear, within the city of Selma, the mayor does not have the authority to fix the problems within the police department. But since, as mayor, I cannot fix them, it was important that I at least expose them. Having done that, my mind, heart, and hands are clear.

I want to thank Interim Police Chief Tommie Reese and Attorney General Steve Marshall for their support while our city wrestle with its public safety challenges. In the short time Interim Chief Reese has been with us, he has done an excellent job for the City. Thank you. Now Chief Kenta Fulford reenters his duties as chief with a direct line of responsibility and authority to the city council.

Moving forward.

