

Desert Hot Springs officers downplay talk of low morale

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Written by

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Desert Hot Springs police union board members distanced themselves Wednesday from a survey that showed officers have low morale.

The results were not intended to be distributed publicly “at this time,” the Police Officers Association vice president and treasurer wrote in a news statement.

Officer Paul Tapia, president of the union, sent the results to media via a consulting firm Tuesday.

“Like any other law enforcement agency, we have internal issues that we deal with,” vice president Sgt. Ken Peary and treasurer Officer Larry Essex wrote Wednesday. “The DHS POA is committed to working with the command staff to resolve whatever internal issues we may have.”

Tapia did not return phone or email messages from The Desert Sun on Wednesday.

The two-page survey asked officers six questions and for a vote of confidence on each of the top-ranking officers. Seventeen of 26 officers filled it out.

It also asked officers to rank Chief Patrick Williams, Cmdr. Dan Bressler and Cmdr. Kate Singer on a scale of 1 to 5 for their accountability, character, integrity, leadership and officer concern.

All but one of the officers said the department has a problem with low officer morale, and 15 of the 17 answered “yes” that trust has diminished between management and officers.

The survey results were dismissed Tuesday by city and police department leaders, who called it an unfair political strategy by “certain union members” aiming to hurt the organization.

The findings landed a week after Paul Tapia told residents and media he was being disciplined for filing a complaint against a former sergeant.

Mayor Yvonne Parks said Tuesday the results of the survey did not reflect what she hears from officers.

“I’m hesitant to put a lot of faith in that,” Parks said. “I believe that our chief and commanders are doing an outstanding job.

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