

## Statement of the Mayor and Council

May 20, 2018

As the Mayor and Council of the great Borough of Mountainside, we want to be clear that recent reports of police misconduct do not reflect the values of this community... We want to assure all residents that we are carefully evaluating all the issues that have come to light and will take all appropriate action that the facts dictate.

We are committed to providing residents with the most accurate and up to date information on all topics that are important to life in our Borough. We all choose to live in Mountainside because of its small-town atmosphere and we understand residents expect access and transparency from their elected officials. Please note, however, that certain limitations imposed upon us by law, restrict what we can share about the matter at this time.

At this time, we can confidently report that when allegations of certain activities centered in the police department came to light almost 18 months ago at a Council meeting, the Mayor and Council responded by informing the Union County Prosecutor's Office of that information and the Prosecutor's Office began an investigation. The County Prosecutor is the Chief law enforcement officer of the County. After that investigation was completed, the Prosecutor's Office made certain recommendations, which were implemented in all respects by the Borough.

With respect to the recent lawsuit filed against Mountainside by five officers and one employee of the police department, we want to assure all residents, we take both the lawsuit, and the allegations very seriously. While some of the allegations have already been investigated by the Union County Prosecutor's Office, some are new, and we learned of them when the lawsuit was filed. We have again advised the Union County Prosecutor's Office of the new allegations and as a result they have opened a new investigation. At this time, we ask for your patience as we complete our investigation and we cooperate with the Union County Prosecutor in their investigation. While our internal review is ongoing, three members of the Mountainside Police Department, including the present Chief, have been put on leave.

All employees of the Borough deserve to work in a positive and productive environment. Behavior that falls outside of our code of conduct will not be tolerated.

Lt. Joseph Giannuzzi has been put in charge of the police department and we have every confidence that he will be able to continue the important work of the department without distraction while continuing to serve and protect the residents of the Borough of Mountainside.

We are proud to represent the residents of Mountainside and will provide additional information as we are able to do so.