

# Police Chief Replies to Mayor On Charges Against Department

Following is the text of a report prepared by Police Chief Charles Champlin for Mayor Earl Miller, regarding allegations made last week about the administration of the police department:

To: Honorable Mayor Earl Miller  
From: Charles P. Champlin, Chief of Police  
Date: April 23, 1956

The following report is being submitted for the purpose of outlining the facts with regard to the allegations that were made in a local newspaper, "The Times," Rogue River, Oregon, under publication date of April 20, 1956, and also in answer to a letter of suggestions submitted to me on March 23, 1956, at a meeting attended by approximately 12 officers of the Department. This letter is also included in the newspaper article. One patrolman acted as spokesman for the group.

This letter of suggestions will be considered first in this report and the answers that were given by me are set forth following the copy of this letter.

Medford, Oregon  
March 23, 1956  
Charles P. Champlin  
Chief, Medford Police Department

Medford, Oregon  
On behalf of a number of the officers of our Police Department, the following recommendations are respectfully submitted in order that the Department may be improved and problems facing the individual officers dealing with the Department as a whole may be solved:

1. Legal Department  
a. A permanent plan be adopted so that complaints signed by individuals not members of the Department can be obtained at all reasonable hours be put in force as soon as possible. It is suggested that a clerk of the City Court be appointed who would be available, especially during the night hours, to verify the complaints.

Complaints Signed  
b. Complaints would be signed by officers not on the day shift but signed immediately upon coming on shift or immediately upon going off shift where the shift ends early in the morning.

c. Revision of the traffic code to conform with the State Traffic Code and revision of the present City Ordinances by standardizing them with the recommended ordinances with the League of Oregon Cities.

d. Support of the Police Department and the Municipal Court by having the legal work and trials fully handled by the Office of the City Attorney.

2. Civil Service  
a. A plan should be set up to insure that an officer may look forward to a permanent position not subject to dismissal without the right of a hearing before a competent and disinterested board not connected with the City Administration or the Police Department as paid employees.

3. Efficiency Reports  
Standardize the efficiency reports to conform with the recommendations of Sgt. Beale, other Police Departments and organ-

izations such as the League of Oregon Cities, etc.

4. Standardize and set out in writing the responsibilities and duties of all officers and patrolmen including a schedule of hours, responsibility for convictions, responsibility for reports, assignment of duties of patrolmen on shift when lack of time prevents doing all things. Scheduling of supervisory personnel should include a regular shift at night and especially on night shifts or weekends.

5. Concentrated effort be made to maintain the Police Department at full strength so that several men will not have to carry the full burden of a shift.

6. That material be available to all members of the department from any conventions, instruction meetings or schools attended by one or two members of the department.

7. That a representative committee of the department be selected to permit minor grievances and complaints to be handled without prejudice to the officer involved.

Prevent Loss  
We feel that action on the above recommendations is necessary to prevent loss of personnel in the near future and to establish definite standards by which the individual officers will know where they are going. We know that some of these matters have been discussed for a period of several years and although there must have been many difficulties, we have been unable to see any real results. It is our purpose to attempt to work these things out so that the department may work as a unit and we, as individuals, may make suggestions without fear of personal reprisal by any of the members. We fully intend to attempt to work this out within the department and feel that if it can be worked out, all of the members will be able to remain. There is no intention of creating any complications outside of the department.

Following are my answers, referred to by number and letter, which will indicate clearly the position taken by me:

1. Legal Department  
a. It is a recognized fact that court complaints must be signed in the presence of the City Magistrate. If the suggestion were followed, it would mean that the City would have to have a Judge on duty 24 hours a day.

b. The answer to this is the same as a. above.  
c. Plans are underway by the City Administration at the present time to have this accomplished.

d. The answer to this is the same as c. above.

It was explained to the officers that the City Administration was proposing in the 1956-1957 budget that a full time City Attorney be hired for the purpose of handling the court procedures as well as revamping and modernizing many of the City Ordinances.

2. Civil Service  
It is the responsibility of the City Administration and not the Chief of Police as to whether or not the Police Department operates under Civil Service.

3. Efficiency Reports  
It was pointed out to the officers that the efficiency report form recommended by Sgt. Beale is used by the Department and that a second efficiency report form used by the Department was set up and planned by the Oregon State Civil Service Commission during the Civil Service Survey which was conducted for the City of Medford in 1954.

Methods of Accomplishment  
4. All of the duties and the methods of accomplishing them are set out in writing in the recruit training material used by the Department and also in other printed material. Each patrolman knows his duty hours. On the 2 night shifts, usually each of the 2 Sergeants is on duty on weekends.

5. A constant recruiting program is carried on by the Department by several different methods. At the present time there are 2 vacancies for patrolmen. I feel that the citizens of Medford are entitled to the highest type of officers that it is possible to obtain when all of the factors are considered. Among the things that the Department has done in attempting to secure personnel to fill vacancies is to discuss the matter at officers meetings with the idea that some of the officers might know of some person they would suggest as an applicant. This procedure is recognized as the best source of manpower. In addition to this the Department has, through the courtesy of the Medford Mail Tribune, had several articles published listing the fact that the department did desire applicants. Appeals have been made also, through the courtesy of KBES-TV, local television station. Oregon State Police Headquarters in Medford has been contacted and they have furnished us with names of possible applicants.

6. An effort is always made to make available the knowledge gained by members of this Department when they have attended schools or conventions.

7. It was pointed out to the officers by me that a grievance committee within the Department would be an undesirable arrangement for the reason that the responsibility for discipline clearly rests on the shoulders of the administrative officers. This is a recognized fact in any organization. At officers meetings which are held once a month, a portion of the time is devoted to considering suggestions made by the officers themselves.

The last paragraph of the letter was discussed with the officers and it was pointed out to the spokesman for the group that it was expected of me to more or less name a date by which all of the suggestions in the letter could be accomplished. This I refused to do and informed the group that I was not being placed under any dead line date or any other undue pressures to see that all of the items were accomplished. It will be noted that the responsibility for the accomplishment of some of the suggestions would rest with other persons other than the Chief of Police. At this point in the meeting it was made

known to me by the spokesman for the group that if the suggestions were not accomplished, most of the officers would be leaving the Department. Since the meeting 2 of these officers have left the Department, one for family reasons and one to accept another position.

A great deal of thought has been given to this entire matter and it is my conclusion that most of the difficulty may be attributed to the efforts of 2 or 3 men. This is not said without foundation.

Every effort is being constantly made to improve the Department. The City Administration has done much to help the Department in the last 3 years by improving the hours of employment, by increasing wages and by vigorous support of the Police Department and its policies.

With further reference to the last paragraph of the letter of suggestions and particularly to the part referring to personal reprisals, I asked the group to cite any examples of reprisals that had either happened to them, personally or what they had known about, and the group cited no instances.

Second Part  
The second part of this report will consist of the balance of the allegations as stated in the aforementioned newspaper article under the heading on the front page "Cops Rebel Against Set up, Charge Ticket-Fixing," and my answers to those. The charge is made that "ticket-fixing" has been a common practice and that there are "untouchables" to whom an officer would dare not issue a traffic citation without fear of being reprimanded.

Along with this allegation it is stated "Cars and trucks belonging to City Councilmen are untouchable". I feel and have felt for a long time that the Police Department is in a very fortunate position with regard to this matter, because it is the policy of the Department to issue citations to all persons, whether or not they are members of the City Council. The records of the Department will clearly indicate that members of the Medford City Council have received citations, and that they have paid their citations the same as any citizen I have not known of a City Councilman asking that a traffic citation be "fixed."

With further reference to "ticket-fixing" as described in the "Times" newspaper article, it is stated that one unnamed patrolman told the "Times" that he waited until 17 of his traffic citations had been fixed. Recently a patrolman became dissatisfied with the Department's policies. The circumstances were that this ex-member refused to enforce traffic laws. At this time he was instructed to enforce the traffic laws in the same manner that he had been trained and schooled and in the way in which he knew it should be accomplished. He informed me that he would not do this and he then resigned.

Traffic Citations  
At this time he advised me that there had been 17 of his traffic citations "fixed." He said he knew who the officers were that "fixed" the tickets but he refused to tell me who they were. I asked him to furnish me the list of names of persons for whom traffic citations had been "fixed" and he informed me that the names were in his notebooks at home. (The notebooks referred to are furnished to the members of the Medford Police Department by the City of Medford and are the property thereof.) He was then instructed to secure them immediately. Approximately one hour and twenty minutes later the officer returned with the notebooks. The

notebooks in question were retained and are presently in the possession of the Department. An investigation is being conducted to learn the identity of the individuals involved in the alleged "fixed" tickets but this has not been completed.

The investigation has revealed one person who stated that an officer had destroyed a ticket which she had been issued. This ticket was issued by the officer who alleged to me that 17 of his tickets had been "fixed."

The officer who was accused of "fixing" the ticket was interrogated and a statement was taken from him. He said that the officer who issued the ticket approached him in the station and told him that he believed he had issued a citation to a friend of his. The second officer, upon hearing the name on the citation, told the issuing officer that she was a friend of his. It was at this time, according to the officer, that the issuing officer suggested that they remove the citation and complaint from the Police Department files and destroy them. This, he said, they did. As a result of this incident, on March 28, 1956, the officer who gave the above statement was suspended from the Department for 30 days without pay, pursuant to the Personnel Rules for the City of Medford and set forth under Ordinance 6033, Article 2, Section 110. I want to make it very clear at this time that this patrolman was not made a "goal" for this type of activity but it is felt that any incident of "ticket-fixing" is an extremely serious matter and I will not tolerate it.

No Other 'Fixed'  
I will assure you that no other citations have been "fixed" to the best of my knowledge and as I stated above, if such incidents are developed, it can be expected that I will take severe disciplinary action. At times traffic citations are voided by the desk officer acting under orders of the City Judge. As a further thought with regard to "ticket-fixing", I would like to advise it is planned for the immediate future, that the City of Medford is going to adopt and use the uniform traffic citation form as recommended by the American Bar Association and the International Chiefs of Police Association. This should eliminate such incidents as the one in which the patrolman was involved and disciplined. With further regard to the allegation of "ticket-fixing" it is observed that in one paragraph of the newspaper article, the Department is accused of "ticket-fixing" and yet in another paragraph in the article, the Department is accused of being too severe in its disciplinary action.

It is charged in the newspaper article that I have abused the use of the patrol cars by having them deliver copies of the newspapers to my home. On several occasions patrolmen have brought a copy of the paper to my home. In many instances I did not ask them to do this.

Submitting List  
It is charged in another paragraph in the article that one patrolman was forced to submit a list of his accounts payable and receipts for bills to the Chief and not to run any charge accounts without the Chief's authority and that the men felt that this was an invasion of their personal affairs. To begin with I hold the firm belief that police officers should pay their bills and I don't believe that any right thinking person will deny this. I did ask one patrolman to furnish me with a list of the bills that he owed and he did this. I have received, during the past 2½ years, a number of calls from merchants in Medford to whom this officer was indebted and they asked me what could be

done to get him to pay some of his bills. In each instance I have called him in and have tried to point out to him the importance of a police officer maintaining good credit relations with the merchants. It is a recognized fact that if a policeman does not conduct his personal financial affairs properly, it definitely brings discredit upon the Department. The point in the newspaper article that I told him he could not charge anything more without getting permission from me is untrue. I discussed this matter with the patrolman on April 21, 1956, and he told me that the newspaper article was in error on this point.

It was charged in the newspaper article that a patrolman had issued a citation to the President of the Medford Chamber of Commerce for parking in a zone set aside for out of state cars. The patrolman stated that when the citation was turned in to the station, his Sergeant told him to go back to the Chamber President and apologize. This the patrolman stated he refused to do.

The facts of this allegation are that approximately 2 years ago the President of the Chamber of Commerce was parked in the Visitors Parking zone in front of the Chamber of Commerce building. The officer, upon seeing this car, began writing a citation. An office girl who works for the Chamber of Commerce saw the officer writing the citation and immediately went outside the building and informed the officer that the President was on Chamber of Commerce business and at this time the officer became, she said, very discourteous in his conversation with her.

The manager of the Chamber of Commerce after hearing from the office girl about the officer's discourtesy, immediately called the police station to make a complaint in regard to the officer's attitude. During the telephone conversation, the manager did not mention the traffic citation.

Apology Urged  
The Sergeant who was on duty at the time told the officer to go back to the Chamber of Commerce and apologize to the office girl for his discourtesy. The office girl advised that approximately 2 days later the officer came into the Chamber of Commerce and though she was out, the officer apologized to one of the other girls for his discourtesy.

Later that day the President and manager of the Chamber of Commerce came in to the station with the citation which was issued to the President by the above officer. It was explained that the President was on Chamber business at the time the citation was issued. I called the issuing officer in to the station and after discussing the circumstances with him, he, the officer, suggested that the citation be voided. This was done.

The newspaper article charges that officers enforcing the parking meter ordinance are instructed to issue citations whether or not the person has violated the ordinance. This is untrue and officers are instructed to issue parking meter citations only if the meter indicated a violation.

Ken Piland Elected To College Rally Squad  
Portland — Ken M. Piland, Medford, was elected to the college rally squad in general elections held last week.

Piland is a freshman music major and a member of band, choir, orchestra and ensemble. He is also a pledge of Alpha Rho Omega fraternity. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Piland, 401 west second ave.



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