



**Official Statement from Lackawanna Director of Public Safety John Wolf
Regarding the Random Act of Violence Situation Involving City Employee RJ Bevilacqua**

(Lackawanna, N.Y. August 4, 2020) On Saturday, August 1, 2020, the Buffalo News featured a front page story regarding an unfortunate random act of violence involving Lackawanna Department of Public Works employee RJ Bevilacqua, which occurred in the 1500 block of Abbott Road near West Elmview the morning of June 1, 2020.

We're deeply saddened and concerned by this event and all in the City of Lackawanna are fully supportive of Mr. Bevilacqua and his family during this difficult time. That said, several statements in the Buffalo News article were inaccurately portrayed based on information Mr. Bevilacqua provided, which I want to clarify here:

- **Lackawanna Police and City officials DID NOT hide an active shooter situation from the public.** Lackawanna Police Officers responding to the 911 call determined from canvassing nearby buildings and properties that Mr. Bevilacqua was the victim of a random act of violence involving a pellet gun, not an active shooter with a .22 caliber weapon as Mr. Bevilacqua claimed upon admission to ECMC and in the article.

This canvass activity included an immediate and thorough search of the building Mr. Bevilacqua indicated to our officers as the one where he believed he saw the alleged shooter close a window. No persons, weapons or shell casings of any nature were found at that location. In addition, witnesses interviewed at the scene did not hear gunfire and no persons, weapons or shell casings of any nature were found in the other canvassed buildings or near/on the DPW sanitation vehicle Mr. Bevilacqua was working on that day.

If this was determined to be an active shooter situation, our tactical response – including closing off the area and notifying the public through a variety of channels – would have been immediate. While we take single, random acts of violence very seriously, they occur more frequently and typically our investigation of such crimes is not publicized unless necessary.

- **Mr. Bevilacqua's claim of being shot with a .22 caliber weapon IS INCONSISTENT with a statement and information he provided to a Lackawanna Police Detective.**

Upon being interviewed at ECMC, Mr. Bevilacqua stated to our detective that he was hit with a .177 pellet. Lackawanna Police are also in possession of an X-ray Mr. Bevilacqua provided which shows the fragment lodged in his lower back to be consistent with a pellet and not a .22 caliber bullet. Again, the notion that Mr. Bevilacqua was hit by a .22 caliber bullet as stated in the article is based on his self-reported condition upon admission to ECMC and not validated by any physical or other evidence.

- **Mr. Bevilacqua's employment with the City of Lackawanna WAS NOT threatened by anyone.** The article further states Mr. Bevilacqua was recently included in a multi-party phone call involving Mayor Annette Iafallo, Council President Frederic Marrano and DPW Commissioner Anthony DeSantis. While it's true this call occurred, in no way was Mr. Bevilacqua's employment with the City threatened.

The call to Mr. Bevilacqua resulted after Mayor Iafallo and others received word that Mr. Bevilacqua had gone to the Buffalo News, with the intent of confirming what they were told. This situation was disappointing as the current City administration went out of their way to aid Mr. Bevilacqua, including providing him with a job when he was having difficulty finding employment.

As this single, random act of violence perpetrated against Mr. Bevilacqua with a pellet gun is both an ongoing police and personnel matter, we will have no further comment until such time as the perpetrator is apprehended. If anyone has any information about this crime, please contact the Lackawanna Police at 716-822-4900.

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