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It's time for chief to go

OUR VIEW

Atkinson's police chief has abused his authority and should be removed from office.

Atkinson Police Chief Philip V. Consentino is at it again. □ Angry because a resident filed a complaint that led a state agency to launch an investigation into his work hours, Chief Consentino admitted this week that he's started what he calls a "private inquiry" into the woman.

Chief Consentino claims he was acting as "Phil Consentino resident" and not "Phil Consentino chief" when he sent a friend, who just happens to be the Police Department's community services officer, to photograph an unmarked Hampstead police cruiser that was parked on Dale A. Childs' property.

But common sense and past experience tells you Chief Consentino's fanciful claim is just not true.

It's much more likely Chief Consentino sent William Anderson over to photograph the police cruiser because he's mad at Mrs. Childs for filing the complaint.

Mrs. Childs, who is an animal control officer for Hampstead but a resident of Atkinson, filed the complaint and believes quite rightly that the chief is harassing her because of it. She also was one of 48 residents who signed a petition trying to have Chief Consentino replaced with a full-time chief.

It's understandable Chief Consentino is mad. But part of being a police chief is having the right temperament to handle situations like this.

If Chief Consentino had any sense, he would have stayed, and ordered his men to stay, as far away from Mrs. Childs as possible.

Instead, he sent an employee who works for him to take

pictures for his "private inquiry."

In an obvious attempt to get Mrs. Childs in trouble, Chief Consentino wrote a letter to the Hampstead Board of Selectmen, Mrs. Childs' bosses, on Atkinson letterhead, signed by "Chief P. Consentino."

This is par for the course for the 59-year-old chief, who was recently ordered to stop intimidating officers trying to form a union.

He also has been known to stand up during selectmen's meetings and attack his critics. And he never lets the facts get in the way of his diatribes.

Chief Consentino's supporters like to say how much he's done for the town, especially for its elderly residents.

That may be true, but he's also become a bully, an embarrassment and a lawsuit waiting to happen. He should not be running a department of full-time officers and holding the arrest powers that come with his position.

It's time for Chief Consentino to go.

If he won't go voluntarily, the selectmen, who seem intimidated by him, should muster the courage to fire him.

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