



Demorest Police Department

P O Box 279
Demorest, GA 30535-0128
Telephone: 706.778.8900
Fax: 706.778.8910

Date: May 6, 2026

To: Chief Chastain and City of Demorest Administration

Ref: Voluntary Termination of Employment

Please accept this letter as formal notification that I will be resigning from my position as Sergeant at the Demorest Police Department. My last day will be May 19, 2026 with my last assigned shift worked being Sunday, May 17, 2026.

Making the decision to leave was not easy, as my time with the city has been rewarding both on a professional and personal level.

I want to first express my sincere gratitude for the opportunities I have had to grow personally. Through my employment here, I have gained lasting friendships that are the equivalent to family. These friendships are not only with my fellow leadership and co-workers within the police department, but within the various other members of the city and its community who have taken their time to get to know my family and shown their kindness to us. Through our joys like the journey of the adoption of our precious boy and through times of trial and tribulations like the loss of my wife's dear grandmother, we have appreciated the care and support these special people have shown. I intend on keeping these relationships for the remainder of my life.

I want to also express my sincere gratitude for the opportunities I have had to grow professionally. When I began my employment here, I was not intending on changing my job necessarily at the time from another. I was attracted to the city by former chief and now current Sheriff Robin Krockum as he began his transition to the Sheriff's Office. I spoke to Chief Chastain and Assistant Chief Minutello and knew I was making a positive decision to come to Demorest at the time, and still hold no regret as it truly was a positive season for my family and I. Through the last two years, I have been able to develop my career in new ways including becoming a law enforcement certified instructor and a specialized instructor in speed detection which brought me out of my comfort zone as I was not an avid public speaker and more of a behind the scene type of person. I owe this development to Chief Chastain for pushing me out of my comfort zone and entrusting me not only as a supervisor, but as the department training coordinator.

I now would like to take a moment to share what led to my decision to transition from the City of Demorest. Over the past 6 months I have personally struggled with the desire to provide meaningful service, while still getting my desires out of my career that I want to have by doing the job that I love and

feel called to do. I honestly feel that I am capped out on the growth in my career as being with a small town with a low call volume, where it is great and is a positive thing, just isn't what I personally want as I feel I still have a number of years to experience this profession with other specialized areas of interest.

What I feel that has also eased my transition is my opinion on matters within the city. Over these past several months as we all know the agency was subject to an internal investigation over personnel. I feel as if it had merit, in my opinion it was handled inappropriately. I feel like the probe was not properly conducted, as initially all department members were not spoken with regarding concerns/for insight/clarification of matters until it was expressed that it would be beneficial, but this was after the initial probe was completed. I also feel that rather than being used to resolve the alleged issues, it became a "witch hunt" of sorts which seemingly created tasks and timed the responsiveness of the agencies command staff abilities to respond and/or make decisions, often times seeming like it was not for the betterment of the agency, but to increase the documentation of failures.

It closely mirrored what many of us saw while not being directly involved in the activities prior to the consolidation of the fire department, and what many near me have questioned is this a possible motive for the police department's future as well?

Even through this, I strongly desired to make the agency better, and to come out of the ashes of our personnel struggles stronger and provide a better service to the Demorest community that I have come to love. I was on the fence of actually making the decision to leave the city or not, as there is still strong potential and great benefits to this city. However, recently a great subordinate of mine who I know to be a fair and dedicated employee and resident to this very city, went to the city administration to speak on an issue he felt he needed to speak about regarding a sense of micro-management of our 911 service calls and one particular on a Sunday afternoon. During this incident, a 911 caller advised our Habersham County Dispatch Center that there was a suspicious male in the park and would like him to be checked out. This particular officer responded to the call along with an assisting agency. While on the scene, he received phone calls from the chief and assistant chief to check the status and details of the incident. This is not exactly wrong, but how it came about is city management sent message requesting them to check into the matter and share details, where this is also not exactly wrong doing, with the pressure of timed responsiveness, I can only believe that it influenced the command staff to look into the matter as quick as possible, which in turn could have distracted the officer in the field from safely doing his job. When brought to the attention of city management of the officer's opinion of this, the conversation turned resulting in this knowledgeable and capable officer being called a "fucking idiot" and told that if he wanted a problem, now he has one. Upon being notified, as I was actively his next line supervisor to be notified, I was appalled at this form of hostile harassment. I have no reason not to believe this officer, as his service and knowledge is effective and I quite literally entrust him with my life.

I write this not to shame anyone, it is a matter that I feel needs some attention, however I along with others do make mistakes frequently, when entrusted in a professional management position you are to be held to a higher standard of professionalism than that was displayed that day.

With this being said, I am fully committed to ensuring a smooth transition during my final two weeks. I am working on detailed handover documentation regarding my position.

I again, am grateful to the city as a whole. I pray and hope only for the best of the City of Demorest, its personnel, and its future. I just feel that my season here has come to an end for at least now, and will continue to be accessible to anyone that is in need of me.

Sincerely,
Steven Squires

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SS', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.