



Candace B. Hollingsworth
Mayor

Tracey Nicholson-Douglas
City Administrator

A LETTER TO OUR COMMUNITY

I, and every member of the City of Hyattsville Police Department, are still deeply devastated to have borne witness, with the rest of our nation and the world, the murder of Mr. George Floyd, deprived of his life by four Minneapolis police officers.

Four police officers, entrusted by the community, had 8 minutes and 46 seconds to collectively decide whether to intervene and relieve Mr. Floyd as he begged for mercy, cried out for his mama, and begged for his life; they did nothing.

As a profession, we must acknowledge our sordid past with our African American men, women, and children. We must commit to constructive dialogue, education, and action to cease and prevent future incidents of racial profiling, abuse of power, and police brutality.

As human beings, we must look ourselves in the mirror and acknowledge the long-standing disparate treatment of members from our African American community by police officers across our country.

Until we unpack and discuss the pain, the fear, the anger, the frustration, the trauma and fatigue that our African American men, women and children experience each day, this gamut of destructive emotions will not translate to healing. Inaction will not transition to positive change.

Some may ask about our own recent officer-involved shooting death of Mr. Leonard Shand. We, too, are deeply devastated after having to make a split-second life-altering decision during this unfortunate armed encounter. We, too, have offered our condolences to the Shand family. Mr. Shand's death weighs heavily on our hearts, and always will.

The investigation of this incident is still ongoing, but has been delayed due to court closures related to COVID-19. I remain in contact with the Prince George's County Police Department and the Office of the State's Attorney awaiting any new developments.

Our Department is committed to doing the work to get us where we desire to be as a community. And I believe we have made great strides working together, engaging one another, and building trust. I do not intend to discount the great works our officers perform and deliver each day they serve. We have an amazing team of passionate police



officers who are committed and invested here in the City of Hyattsville. We wish only to continue building together.

For all who desire to be a part of this journey forward, I welcome you to join our City's Race and Equity Task Force or the Police and Public Safety Advisory Committee to begin this necessary work on our path toward justice and healing. Both committees work with our community and City's staff, and report directly to our Mayor and Council.

The City of Hyattsville Police Department is committed to our core values of service, integrity, and respect. We are committed to the delivery of constitutional, ethical policing. We are human, and there will be times that we make mistakes. We also take corrective action when we are wrong through either training, disciplinary action, or absolute separation from employment.

Our officers receive the most contemporary training available regarding implicit bias, use of force, and de-escalation. We are pursuing additional training to build upon the training we've received on implicit bias with Dr. Kris Marsh at the University of Maryland and additional crisis intervention training with the Affiliated Sante Group.

In our quest to learn more about our role and relationship with the African American community from a historical perspective, we curated a guided tour that included an in-depth discussion segment at the National African American Museum of History and Culture.

Our City and Department formally adopted the Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing implementing the 6 pillars into our organization at every level. We have also begun the process of updating our policies to bring them into alignment with our community's values and 21st century policing.

In closing, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the family and friends on the loss of their beloved, George P. Floyd. His life mattered. I fully recognize that Black lives matter. Not because one life is more superior than the other, but because the lives and voices of African American people have been marginalized, abused, and extinguished since we first placed our footprints on this soil. This unfortunate culmination of history repeating itself has brought us where we are today. Nothing changes if nothing changes.

We can do better. We must do better. Our lives, our children's lives, and our futures depend on it.

Sincerely,



Amal E. Awad
Chief of Police

