
POLICE DEPARTMENT

May 29, 2020

To the Beloit community,

It is with a heavy heart that I share this post today. The images and the events leading up to George Floyd's death while in police custody are horrifying, heartbreaking and deeply disturbing. George Floyd's life mattered. And it was a life that was ended too soon.

As police chief of the City of Beloit Police Department, I publicly denounce the actions of the officers involved in this incident. I think it is important that our community knows the men and women of this diverse department serve our community as guardians on a daily basis. Our officers regularly exhibit compassion and caring for our community, and take great pride in those efforts. As law enforcement professionals, our department condemns this excessive use of force.

Our community embraces its diversity, and the horrific situation in Minneapolis has led many of you to ask important questions. A few of you have asked how to prevent an incident like this in Beloit. I understand those fears based on historical issues between law enforcement and communities, and I want to address those fears.

During my tenure as chief, I have emphasized that the culture of our department is one of guardianship. This includes an understanding by our officers of the historical issues that have affected people of color. Furthermore, in selecting members of the department, we have gone to great lengths to be reflective of our city while examining character, competency and the ability to appropriately police diverse communities. As a result, we have enhanced our community relationships, trust and transparency. We have not only increased our positive face-to-face contacts in neighborhoods, but we have provided "Conversations with the Community" to discuss issues like use of force and traffic stops and to hear residents' concerns. We will continue to do so. You've responded in kind by sharing information to help keep our community safe. We are so thankful for those efforts we've put into place, and for your assistance. Together, we are making Beloit safer and building diverse relationships.

In terms of training our officers, we have provided comprehensive de-escalation training, utilizing a national model. In addition, we have provided implicit bias and crisis intervention training. We continue to educate our officers in these topics on a regular basis and have discussed this particular situation with them in depth.

The Beloit Police Department uses force in very few instances. Our use of force statistics and data are available at <https://www.beloitwi.gov/index.asp?SEC=3209CC74-34C0-4358-A679-9B061EE965C3&DE=FA507A9C-2ED5-4E8C-B098-8F3E78568AF6>. All use of force situations require a supervisory review to ensure that force was appropriately utilized. In no circumstance would the compression of someone's neck be an appropriate use of force in an attempt to place them into custody.

The City of Beloit Police Department values the life of all members of our community. Many of our officers have put their own personal safety at risk while saving the lives of others in this

community. As guardians, they will continue to serve the Beloit community with dignity and respect. I am very proud of their efforts to do so.

We will continue to be in your neighborhoods building relationships during this trying time. We need the continued trust of our community to ensure that the significant progress made in reducing crime in Beloit is sustainable. Most importantly, I want you to be assured that our officers' motivations are in the best interest of the community and in keeping you safe. Thank you for taking the time to read this message and we look forward to justice being served in this incident.

Sincerely,
Chief David B. Zibolski