

Statement By Camp Hill Borough Regarding Current National Policing Issues

As stated by Camp Hill Chief of Police Steve Margeson at Borough Council's June 10, 2020 meeting:

"We are all aware of the events of May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, MN resulting in the death of George Floyd at the hands of Officers of the Minneapolis Police Department. We're also aware of the nationwide response that has followed his death.

In the wake of this incident, and the questions and concerns which have arisen regarding policing in the United States, it's important to state that the Camp Hill Police Department continues to be committed to the fair and equal treatment of all citizens and will continue to follow best police practices and the Constitution of the United States in service to all citizens regardless of race, color, ethnicity, gender, age, religious beliefs or citizenship.

The oath that every Camp Hill Officer has taken demands nothing short of that, and the residents of Camp Hill and all citizens deserve nothing less."

Before and since the June Council meeting, Chief Margeson, working with Mayor Simpson and Borough Council, has been reviewing relevant policies, practices and training, and we can advise of the following status, actions taken, and actions to be taken.

Use of force ("UOF") policy. Our existing policy is thorough and addresses almost all of the issues that have been raised in the ongoing national discussions regarding policing. We have reviewed the policy and are making some enhancements, and we will release the revised policy to the public in the first half of July.

Use of chokeholds. Our UOF policy prohibits use of chokeholds.

De-escalation techniques for conflict situations. De-escalation is addressed in our UOF policy. Most of our officers have received training in de-escalation techniques. Additional officers had been scheduled to attend de-escalation training this year, however it was cancelled due to covid-19. We will be sending officers to that training when it becomes available, and pursue additional de-escalation and related training as opportunities become available.

Duty to Intervene. We will be adding to the UOF policy a requirement for officers to intervene in any use of force encounter in which they observe or become aware that another officer is using or has used unnecessary or excessive force.

Cameras for recording police-citizen interactions. Earlier this year, the police department purchased body cameras and instituted the requirement that they be worn by all uniformed officers and used on all calls for service and traffic stops. Additionally, our in-car cameras were upgraded and synchronized with body cameras. These cameras provide valuable documentation of many, if not most, police-citizen encounters.

Surplus military equipment/other military-type equipment. The police department's only surplus military equipment or other military-type equipment is helmets. These are intended for use only for rare situations in which officers reasonably expect they are entering into a known or likely physical conflict situation.

Reporting on citations and arrests by race. The Chief of Police will provide an annual report to the Mayor and the public that will include citations and arrest data by race as well as a summary of Use of Force incidents.

Other policies under review. We are also reviewing our policies on Community Policing, Constitutional Policing, and Police Supervision.

Accreditation. We would also note that the Camp Hill Police Department maintains accreditation through the PA Chiefs Association (Pennsylvania Law Enforcement Accreditation Commission). Only approximately 10% of police departments in Pennsylvania are accredited. Maintaining our accreditation is one of the ways we stay informed of and adopt best practices for law enforcement.

We remain committed to the highest standards of conduct for our police force, we take the ongoing discussion of these issues with the utmost seriousness, and we are committed to transparency and an ongoing dialogue with the community we serve.