



Office of the City Manager
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Dear Eau Claire Community Members:

The tragic death of George Floyd has focused national attention on law enforcement, especially critical use of force decisions, and necessarily challenged practices and assumptions that have too often inadequately safeguarded the safety and freedom of all we are sworn to serve and protect. The Eau Claire Police Department is committed to strengthening public trust and legitimacy among all those we serve. We are dedicated to fulfilling our responsibility through safe, fair and constitutional policing practices. Through greater awareness and intentional efforts, we can develop actions which strengthen community trust. Together, we can maintain public safety and welfare while respecting and valuing each individual of every race and national origin.

We are writing today to describe and affirm our ongoing efforts and outline new initiatives to validate the trust the community has placed in the Eau Claire Police Department. We understand that we can always do better and pledge to do so every day we are in service to our fellow community members. This is our *Commitment to our Community*, which is centered on four principles:

Policing Philosophy: The Eau Claire Police Department employs a community-policing philosophy that prioritizes partnerships and problem-solving to address conditions that impact safety. We view the officer's role as a community partner and guardian of peace and freedom. Institutionalizing this culture within the Eau Claire Police Department begins before an officer is hired. We need to hire the right people. Our police officer hiring practices are rigorous and overseen by the non-partisan civilian Eau Claire Police and Fire Commission (PFC). Under the direction of the PFC, we search for candidates who are community-minded and share our organizational values. The preferred policing skills are communication and problem-solving skills, not tactical aptitude or procedural knowledge. It is more important to find a candidate who has the right ethical qualities, cares about community, respects all people and can solve problems by working with others. Through these standards, we are ensuring Eau Claire has quality police officers with the right public service motivation.

Our Philosophy Commitment:

- Using extensive and thorough hiring practices, we will continue to hire officers with high ethical standards that are proficient in communication and problem solving
- Continue approaching community policing as a part of every officer's responsibility
- Intentionally seek out and maintain pathways of communication and partnership with communities of color and disenfranchised populations
- Continue to work in partnership with the community, to earn trust and legitimacy
- Approach policing as a civilian function in partnership with the community for the safety and welfare of all

Training and Education: The Eau Claire Police Department will continue to prioritize training on topics such as bias, fair and impartial policing practices and de-escalation strategies. Each officer receives training in these areas beyond State of Wisconsin mandates as part of our department's annual continuing education requirements. The department employs an award-winning de-escalation training program that is evidence-based and is considered a required core competency for all of our officers. Our department has entered into a partnership with the University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity to develop mandatory continuing education curriculum.

Our Training Commitment:

- Each Officer will receive training on:
 - De-escalation tactics
 - Implicit bias and fair and impartial policing strategies
 - Antiracism
 - Cultural competencies
 - Principles of constitutional policing
 - Best policing practices

Policy and Oversight: In order to ensure proper accountability, it is imperative to have strong policy and oversight. The Eau Claire Police Department utilizes model policies and procedures developed by nationally recognized efforts. We will subject policies to ongoing review, in constructive dialogue with those internal and external to the organization of diverse and varied perspective, expertise and experience. We will engage and train our officers in such best practices.

Our Policy and Oversight Commitment:

- Continue to require officers to intervene when witnessing excessive force or other forms of officer misconduct
- Prioritize de-escalation
- Utilization of a use of force continuum when dealing with escalating situations
- Consideration of other options before employing deadly force
- Mandate that recording and documentation technology is used properly
- Implement, within budgetary constraints, current recording and documentation technology
- Prohibit the use of chokeholds
- Develop systems for collecting and analyzing race-specific data on traffic stops, field interviews and arrests

Transparency: The Eau Claire Police Department will be transparent and as open with the public we serve as is consistent with victim's rights and other legal requirements. Transparency is an important component to strengthening trust. It is necessary to have guidelines and systems for citizen comments, complaints and inquiries. Whenever practical, this information will be made available to the public to promote transparency and measure outcomes.

Our Transparency Commitment:

- Keep current a webpage addressing questions and concerns regarding police policies and practice
- Initiate a *Task Force on Transparency in Policing*. Working with residents, especially from groups that are typically under represented or disenfranchised, identify needed improvements in transparency and data-driven strategies

It is our vision to be a trusted police organization that ensures a safe community with an exceptional quality of life. The men and women of the Eau Claire Police Department earn this trust by exhibiting our values of Integrity, Dignity, Transparency, Compassion, Commitment and Professionalism. On behalf of my fellow officers and our employees, it is our honor to serve everyone who lives and works in Eau Claire. We strive daily at risk of life and livelihood to serve and protect others to the best of our ability. With your help we will fulfill this *Commitment to our Community*.

Sincerely,



Dale Peters
City Manager



Matt Rokus
Chief of Police