



CITY OF PORTLAND
Police Department
Frank T. Clark, Chief of Police

May 29, 2020

An Open Letter to Our Portland Community:

The Portland Police Department's values are *Integrity, Leadership* and *Service*. These values guide us well as we go about our mission of working in partnership with the community to prevent and reduce crime, protect life and property, and help resolve neighborhood problems while protecting the constitutional rights of all.

As human beings and law enforcement professionals, we are saddened and deeply disturbed by the recent and tragic police-involved fatality in Minneapolis, MN, and the negative impacts such incidents have not only upon the trust of our profession, but within our broader communities as well. Our hearts go out to George Floyd's family and friends, and we, like many, are awaiting answers and justice.

You should know that the Portland Police Department has policies and strategies in place in order to prevent such a tragedy from happening here. Maine's law enforcement community, generally, and our Portland police officers, specifically, are literally second to none. As a professional law enforcement agency, we provide our officers with the training, policies and resources necessary to make the best possible decisions under what can, at best, be tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving situations. Our officers work tirelessly at communicating and forming collaborative partnerships within the community. Our hiring, training and disciplinary standards are high, and are intended to produce the best possible police officers and decision-makers with the highest moral and ethical compasses. Our policies and training prohibit neck type restraints. They also call for our officers' use of force to be in response to an actual or imminent threat. Our ongoing training, whether in de-escalation, defensive tactics, use of force decision making, or implicit bias is aimed at allowing our officers to protect you, the public, and themselves, in a competent, disciplined and professional manner.

As the investigations are underway in Minnesota, we will continue our efforts to critically assess and critique our policies, training and procedures, seeking to align each with recognized best practices. We will continue to work hard to attract and hire a diverse, capable, and professional staff of men and women in order to provide the high level of service to which our community has become accustomed. And you can rely upon our officers continuing to treat people with dignity and respect, both of which are core principles of procedural justice and police legitimacy.

We want to thank you for your ongoing and critically important support. The *Public are the Police and the Police are the Public*. Like always, we stand with you.

Sincerely,

Frank Clark
Chief of Police
City of Portland

Officer Les Smith
President
Police Benevolent Association

Sgt. Eric Nevins
President
Supervisory Officers' Association