



Gonzales Police Department

SERVE • CARE • CONNECT

KEITH WISE
CHIEF OF POLICE

June 4, 2020

As your City Manager and Police Chief, like many of you, we watched with disgust and anger the deplorable actions of a Minneapolis police officer as he knelt on George Floyd's neck and took his life as his colleagues stood by. Absolutely nothing can justify the actions of those officers. The tragic incident serves as a reminder and challenge to all of us, that we must work together as a nation and a community to change the systematic and institutional racism that sadly continues to plague many of our institutions.

However, beyond our moral outrage, we both recognize the responsibility and accountability we must practice as we serve our community. One of our most important responsibilities, with the guidance of our Mayor and City Council, is to ensure that our staff treat everybody with dignity, love, and respect. Government at all levels, including cities, exists to create and advance communities, not to tear them down.

We recognize and understand that a few Minneapolis police officers failed us all, their duty was to protect and serve the people, and their actions cannot and should not be ignored, and/or forgiven. Their actions have damaged the trust and relationships built by thousands of goodhearted law enforcement officials everywhere. Nevertheless, here in our community, we choose to learn from others' mistakes, and we will use this as an opportunity to recommit to do better.

Over the years, the Gonzales Police Department has seen countless men and women who wear the uniform for the right reasons: to serve and protect you. This, indeed, requires building trust, communication, and in our community doing things in "The Gonzales Way" through Love, Care, and Connect." Our officers understand that they are held to a high standard and have a tremendous responsibility to the community that can be best served with authentic engagement, communication, understanding, and trust. All our officers receive significant training and, in recent years, have participated in critical incident and cultural sensitivity and competency training. We also know it is essential to review our policies and practices to ensure that they align with our expectations. We will continue to do all we can to ensure our police department is receiving all of the education and training necessary. We will never stop working to enhance a culture and environment that puts people and community first, with officers who push the law enforcement profession to serve in harmony with the community.

We understand that community members may be feeling angry, scared, frustrated, distrustful, and betrayed. We are a diverse community with different values and beliefs, but unjust behaviors that target one group disproportionately or that perpetuates discrimination and violence towards people, are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. Frankly, it has no place in our community or police department. Furthermore, we recognize, support, and understand the need to hold peaceful demonstrations and protest the injustice and senseless killings of those who, like George Floyd, have lost their lives unjustly.

You have our pledge and commitment that the City of Gonzales, its Mayor and City Council along with the men and women of the Gonzales Police Department, stand ready to listen and engage with you in meaningful dialogue, programs, initiatives, and partnerships that result in sustainable change and improvement.

If you are interested in having a meaningful discussion about the events that are transpiring across the country or have any thoughts, concerns, or suggestions on what we can do here locally to improve, please reach out. Only through communication and understanding will we all be able to do better for our community. Also, you should expect us to announce soon a virtual town hall meetings in Spanish and English and an invitation to discuss and provide input on our police processes and hiring practices. We invite you to be our partner in establishing practices that best fit our community and do justice for the people of Gonzales. We have many more opportunities forthcoming to engage and want you to know that our doors are always open. Only together can we move forward and build the community of which we all wish to be a part of.

Respectfully,



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