



VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

Open Letter to the Scarsdale Community

June 03, 2020

Dear Scarsdale Community,

As the Mayor, Village Manager, and Chief of Police and on behalf of the entire Scarsdale Police Department, we want to express our condemnation of the horrific actions and inactions of police officers who took the life of George Floyd. We join our local, regional, and national colleagues in denouncing this abuse of authority and calls to hold these individuals accountable for their actions. The Scarsdale Board of Trustees recently issued a [Community Statement](#) on this subject.

We know it is not enough to merely provide this Community Statement. It is through our actions in building trust that will move us forward in protecting the dignity of all.

As always, the Scarsdale Police will support and ensure every individual's right to express themselves through peaceful protest and assembly. We must also protect lives and property. To this end, the Scarsdale Police is partnered with the New York State Police and all Westchester police departments to ensure that protection.

The Scarsdale Police Department will not allow any of its officers to abuse their authority in carrying their sworn obligation to our community. We demand that all of our officers act immediately to intervene in preventing anyone from being abused.

It is our responsibility to ensure that Scarsdale's officers conduct themselves professionally at all times and continue to embody the principles of social justice for all individuals as well as procedural justice whereby we work to ensure a system that affords transparent equity for all. The Police Department's primary function is public service and positive police-community relations. As law enforcement officers, our police are also expected to enforce laws and ordinances, maintain peaceful public safety and resolve conflict.

The Scarsdale Police Department has long recognized the importance of maintaining a professional law enforcement agency that is accountable to its citizenry. This citizenry extends well beyond our own residents. Our officers engage in thousands of police-citizen encounters each year. The overwhelming majority of these contacts are positive in nature, resulting in a positive resolution to the issue that initiated the contact. Other encounters are the result of our enforcement obligation and it is here where we must exercise the utmost professionalism, restraint and good judgement.

We truly believe that the strength of our department is the diversity and character of our officers. Our officers come from all walks of life and have experience in a variety of interests. Our officers are moms, dads, daughters and sons of families who are proud that their loved ones chose a profession that places others above themselves. We need to remember this and reinforce this every day we go out on patrol.

We also believe that the recruitment process is the most critical time to vet potential officers to determine the “right fit” for our department. This fit, requires that our officers respect all persons and treat everyone with compassion and empathy. We believe it is worth losing a potential candidate who is not fully vetted, than to fill a position for the sake of expediency.

The Scarsdale Police Department is a Nationally Accredited agency through CALEA, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. The commission is comprised of members of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the National Sheriffs Association and the Police Executive Research Forum.

Our department is the only Nationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency in Westchester County and only one of six in New York State. Out of 17,500 law enforcement agencies nationwide, there are only approximately 1,200 which have achieved national accredited status. Our department has held this distinction for over 30 years. In order to maintain this status, the police department must continuously adhere to 450 best practice standards in law enforcement. We are required to voluntarily submit to an inspection of our personnel, policies and procedures every 3 years to ensure continued compliance. Failure to do so, results in the loss of accredited status.

In practice, our department strictly adheres to the requirements of CALEA, our General Orders, Department Rules and Regulations and New York State Division of Criminal Justice Accreditation Standards. Officers are held accountable to these policies and procedures in an ongoing process of daily observation, continual evaluation and discipline procedures. Each and every complaint, whether initiated internally or through external complaints, is addressed and investigated. The results of founded complaints range from loss of time to termination. Our department has had instances of founded complaints and has always acted in a decisive and swift manner in addressing the complaint with complete documentation. Annual complaints can be found on our department website, which is available to the public.

Proactively, members of the department receive regular training in bias-based profiling, law enforcement ethics, response to persons with disabilities, proper police tactics and use of force, to name a few.

We wanted to provide a snapshot of our department and share the importance of having a professional agency. We know it’s not enough to maintain what we have achieved; it is crucial that we continue to hold ourselves accountable to the philosophy and tenets of valuing all human

life and to reinforce the belief that everyone, whether a complainant, victim or person in our custody, be protected and treated with the utmost dignity.

We as a community hold our police department to the highest of standards and the department holds itself to those same standards. Any officer who violates their oath of office, has no place in our agency or in law enforcement.

We welcome the opportunity to continue this discussion and partner with the community.

Sincerely,



Marc Samwick
Mayor



Stephen M. Pappalardo
Village Manager



Andrew A. Maturro
Chief of Police