

From: Mayor

Sent: Friday, August 2, 2019 10:52 AM

To: Mayor <Mayor@cityofmadison.com>

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Subject: UPDATE: 6/17 Community Meeting; re: MPD, West High Student Incident

Dear Friends,

This note is being sent to everyone who joined us at the 6/17 community forum.

Thank you again for helping us brainstorm larger solutions to address challenges specific to youth, mental health, race, and emergency response. We recognize that this was yet another convening of its kind, likely not the last, and despite the strong attendance, not everyone was able to join and our invitations were few with the goal of an immediate, targeted, and productive conversation.

First, I need to acknowledge the pain experienced by members of our community who viewed the video of the incident in early June and who feel that this young man was denied the protections that law is supposed to provide. I am painfully aware of the harm caused when our City police accountability processes seem to protect the rights of our officer but lack the transparency and accountability to provide our community a sense of justice.

While I need to allow the investigative process to run its course, as everyone in a free democracy is entitled to due process, some of the actions in this case offend our values and sense of justice. The fact that the law, in certain circumstances, allows certain actions to occur, does not make it right. Nor does it make it just. The fundamental duty of police is to serve humanity. Police are required to only use force that is reasonable and necessary, and it is my belief that we must do better.

The officer's actions may or may not have violated the law; and may or may not have violated MPD policy; however, police actions in this incident are not and will never be acceptable as best practice in the City of Madison.

We can do better and we will do better.

In the aftermath of every incident, every major operation should include a discussion about how we can improve and prepare for the next occurrence. This should include police incidents.

I am committed to creating intentional and sustainable systems of police accountability. Since the Police and Fire Commission is the only entity that can discipline or fire a police officer, I commit to excellent appointments to that body. I expect a full accounting of the MPD implementation of the OIR recommendations and the implementation of research-based best practices. I look forward to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc MPD Procedure Review Committee and intend to use their recommendations as a springboard to implement accountability systems that serve the interests of our community and the rights of our officers. As Mayor, I am deeply committed to creating a meaningful civilian oversight that serves to audit police practices and help ensure our police department serve their role as peace officers—serving the interests of justice and equity. With this in mind, and with Police and Fire Commission oversight of MPD, know that I am being very intentional in making appointments to the body that most effectively represent the diversity of perspectives, needs, and concerns of our community.

With regards to our 6/17 meeting, we covered a lot of ground in the brief time we had together. After combing through the contributions of the group, which appropriately cited major, deep-rooted institutionalized issues and cultural structures, we found that many identified concerns and proposed solutions fell under the oversight of multiple levels of government, from MMSD School Board to the County to the State. We intentionally narrowed our next steps to fall within the City's formal purview to ensure prompt and tangible outcomes. However, beyond our next steps outlined below, we intend to leverage our relationships with these other entities for more comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable change.

With regards to our next steps, we sought to identify efforts that (a) employ both long- and short-term change, some to provide immediate solutions to redress our current concerns, while others address much needed cultural change over time; (b) inform a holistic and multifaceted training for emergency response; (c) focus on trauma-informed care and institutional racism; (d) facilitate mutually-respectful community engagement; and (e) increase transparency.

We propose the following next steps, of course, as a starting place for ongoing efforts that the City will take to address these concerns.

1. **Black mental health practitioner involvement in Madison Police Department training.** A preliminary internal meeting has already been held to advance this effort.
2. **Explore the reduction of MPD involvement in response to mental health crises via different models,** including the "mental health ambulance" model. Preliminary meetings have been had with the Fire Department to further explore feasibility for their involvement, and research into options and models is continuing.
3. **Partner with local education institutions to grow Black practitioner pool for future community employment.**
4. **Appointment of Jacqueline Boggess, Executive Director of the Center for Family, Policy, and Practice, to the Police and Fire Commission,** which provides direct oversight to Madison's Police and Fire Departments.

Another internal suggestion includes the creation of a cross-departmental project team that would map out a communications and action plan for what to do when another community emergency arises. This model has been

successful with other community challenges and enables community and emergency responders to know each other's roles and responsibilities, as well as help identify possible areas for greater collaboration. Should we choose to explore this further, we would wish to engage community in shaping its configuration to ensure it is meaningful and most responsive.

We welcome your thoughts and feedback.

Our collective brainstorming suggestions can be obtained from Linda at lvakunta@cityofmadison.com.

Thank you again for always showing up to this work, whether or not our City has. Please know that we are in this work for the long haul, appreciate your support, and thank you for your candor as well as for the time and energy you invest each day to better our community.

Sincerely,

Mayor Satya

Satya Rhodes-Conway
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(She/her/hers)

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