



June 2020

An Open Letter to the Martinez Community:

I have been asked on several occasions about my thoughts on George Floyd. The images of seeing him treated in a sub-human manner will be forever burned in my mind. There is nothing okay about putting a knee on someone for 8 minutes and 46 seconds while they plead with you that they can't breathe. It goes against everything that the police stand for.

Police Officers are here to help others and make them feel safe. We arrest people to enforce the law, in which I do not think the vast majority of society has a problem with. However, the way we go about enforcing is a critical issue. It must be done humanely, with care, and in a manner that is consistent, equal, and fair. A case like George Floyd was criminal, senseless, and brutal. There is no part of this case that is consistent with the oath a police officer takes to safeguard the public, period.

The question that many of the community has asked is where do we go from here? As we move forward as a Department, we are committed to improvement and transparency to the community. We also wish to engage our community in open dialogue to ensure we are policing the community as you, the community, expect.

In our commitment to transparency, we will be focusing on implementing several new initiatives. The first is investing in a Body Worn Camera Program. We previously explored a Body Worn Camera program, but the costs were prohibitive. Given the need to ensure the Police Department have the tools in place to bolster transparency, we will be looking to implement this program within the next Fiscal Year.

As the Chief of Police, I will also be working on creating a Chief's Advisory Panel from a diverse cross-section of our community. The goal of the advisory panel is to meet in an effort to ensure we are policing the community as the community expects us to.

I am also committed to hosting a Town Hall Meeting to discuss the Police Department and answer questions from the community. Further, I am committing to an annual review of our uses of force to the City Council to provide information and details on our uses of force as this issue is of concern to the community.



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As I look at the Martinez Police Department and the City of Martinez through my lens as a minority, immigrant, Chief of Police, father, husband, and human being, I see a city and organization that tries to serve its community each and every day, no matter where you come from, what color your skin is, or who you are. That has been clear to me since becoming the Chief of Police five years ago. I am honored to serve as the Chief of Police in Martinez, alongside sworn officers and non-sworn staff who humbly work to make this community a better place every day. This Department has enjoyed a significant level of support in Martinez over the years and we will keep that trust by placing the community first. We will be transparent with you, we will listen to you, and most of all we are to uphold the oath that we have made as peace officers to safeguard all members of the public.

Sincerely,

Manjit Sappal
Chief of Police