



Town of
North Castle Westchester County, NY
Supervisor Michael J. Schiliro

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

This message addresses exclusively the George Floyd tragedy. I will send a second email in the next day or two dedicated to Covid-19 and the Re-Opening of Westchester: Phase II.

We are in an extraordinary time in our lives. None of us could have envisioned anything close to our way of life under the Covid pandemic where masking-up, distancing, and disinfecting hands is now part of our regular life. Add to that the natural emotion and nationwide reaction to the heinous murder of George Floyd; the video is hard to watch. It's difficult to imagine how one human being can treat another human being like that, and the inaction of his colleagues just standing by. I do believe that when we look back on these times, it will prove that we were at a crossroads. It's time to dig deep and re-examine many of the things in our society that we take for granted. It's a time for character, for decency, for reflection, and for action.

In contrast, I cannot help but reflect on our North Castle Police Department. I have served longer than anyone on the current board, over 13 years, and have been involved in hiring 22 of our current 32 women and men who protect us. Some of you have asked, and more of you may want to know additional background on our Police Department and our officers, as many responsible voices on the national level are urging just that. You will read shortly about the care that is taken in our hiring process from our Police Chief, but I can share with you that although I and the Board are far from perfect, we insist upon and take much care in our hiring process, especially for the women and men that we trust to protect all of us, and I am proud of that.

I would ask that you read a heartfelt message from our valued Police Chief Peter Simonsen, as I requested he address some of the main concerns being raised by all. My closing comments are below that.

MESSAGE FROM OUR POLICE CHIEF PETER SIMONSEN

My name is Peter Simonsen, I am the Chief of the Town of North Castle Police Department. I have proudly served as a police officer in North Castle for 30 years. I have been Chief for 6 years.

The Town of North Castle Police Department is comprised of 32 sworn Police Officers. We are a diverse group that views policing as our profession, and strive for excellence in our service to the North Castle Community. As a local police department, we provide public safety, focusing on addressing problems as they arise and on supporting the interests of the residents. In this way, we help to maintain the quality of life desired by our residents.

All of our police officers underwent rigorous scrutiny and thorough background checks as part of our review in consideration of hiring. They also were subject to psychological evaluation, and interviews of references, former employers, and family members were conducted. We strive to staff our department with the highest quality candidates available.

All these officers then attended the police academy supported by the Westchester County Department of Public Safety. The curriculum of this academy is set forth by the New York State Department of Criminal Justice Services. This training covers a broad spectrum of subjects and skills. Some of these include the study of the New York State Penal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, and the United States Constitution. In addition, recruits are taught defensive tactics, arrest procedures, and the use of force and its appropriateness based on the circumstances.

Upon completion of the police academy, new recruits are subject to an intensive in-house field training program. This field training program is a form of continued education, and affords the recruit with practical application of those skills taught in the academy. In each of these phases, the

officer's proficiency, knowledge, and general performance are constantly evaluated.

In addition, the Town of North Castle Police Department is a DCJS accredited agency, and has been since 2000. This accreditation is a voluntary program that provides for greater excellence through a vast set of standards established by the Department of Criminal Justice Services. The accreditation program outlines all processes and procedures to be followed by our agency in all of our operations. It requires adherence, diligence, and proof of application of these standards. Our compliance with these standards must be documented daily, submitted quarterly, and reviewed in totality every 5 years. The details of this program can be found on the [DCJS web site](#).

All of these processes, as well as our devotion to the community, have created a mutual bond of respect and trust with the North Castle Community. Our relationship, past accomplishments, and continued dedication are a significant source of pride to our officers, who serve the community with distinction and excellence.

The horrific murder of George Floyd in Minnesota is profoundly disturbing, extremely sad, and frustrating to us all. As Chief of the North Castle Police Department, and on behalf of the officers who share my feelings on this tragedy, I am appalled by the disregard for human life and brutality that resulted in his death. It disturbs me as a human being, as a citizen, and as a law enforcement professional.

Chief Peter Simonsen

I thank Chief Simonsen for sharing some practical and very personal thoughts. We take this matter very seriously and we support Westchester County Executive George Latimer's initiative to form a working group to review Police training at the Academy.

There is a distinction being against police brutality, and just being against police with a broad brush; police brutality and prejudice have no place in our society, and those voices supporting those efforts need to be heard. We have been alerted to and/or requested permission for the possibility of various gatherings in our Town over the next few days. I would ask that you keep perspective in these times, be respectful and decent to each other, and most of all, listen.

I will leave you with this thought. Last night I watched the emotional movie Coach Carter with my daughters (for the countless time), one of our favorites. The quote below, as retold by character Timo Cruz taken (not verbatim) from the Marianne Williamson poem, has such relevant meaning in this times,

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine as children do. It's not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own lights shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

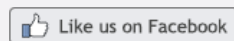
We are seeing this poem play out in towns, villages, and cities all across America. One of my employees taught me that we have two eyes, two ears, and one mouth for a reason. It's a time to listen.

As always, stay safe and mask up,

Respectfully,

Michael Schiliro - Supervisor Town of North Castle

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