

# OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF



CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH

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June 4, 2020

Chairwoman Sylvia Nery-Strickland and Commissioners  
Human Rights Commission  
City of Virginia Beach  
2424 Courthouse Drive  
Virginia Beach, VA 23456

Dear Chairwoman Nery-Strickland and Commissioners,

The death of George Floyd and the resulting unrest in our city and country have made it so that I feel compelled to contact you.

Judging by the video alone, the death of George Floyd was criminal and completely unjustifiable. The officers responsible should be held criminally accountable and I'm encouraged to see that they have been charged. The wheels of justice often turn more slowly than we would like, but for the sake of the victim, his family and the officers involved, the full investigation must play out so that justice can prevail.

Every law enforcement officer I have discussed this incident with is outraged. Those actions do not represent us.

In applying this situation to the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office, I can tell you that what I saw on the video violates our use of force policy and training and would not be tolerated here. I reminded my deputies of that last Friday. In addition, we regularly update our use of force policies and train our deputies on how to use them appropriately. For that reason, I am confident that our use of force is restrained, appropriate and applied without bias, and I welcome scrutiny of our policies and records if you have suggestions or concerns. I have attached our foundational policies on use of force, ethics and biased-based enforcement for your review.

I understand the anger felt by the community and by all of us who value human life. If members of our community feel they do not have equal protection under the law, then we must work with them to fix that.

An important element is that our law enforcement must be representative of our community, which is why I have prioritized diversity in hiring, retention and promotion and do not tolerate discrimination in any form. I am proud that people of color make up 30% of the Virginia Beach Sheriff's Office, nearly the same as the city.

I also fully support my deputy sheriffs, who put their lives on the line to protect and serve this community every day. The death of George Floyd – and any incidence of police brutality – tarnishes everyone who wears the badge, undermines the public's sacred trust and requires us to reexamine ourselves and ensure that we are upholding our values and our oaths. We have done that and we will continue to do that.

We will also support people's First Amendment right to peaceful protest while also ensuring the public safety of our community, both people and property.

I condemn racism in all forms. I also condemn police brutality. I stand for equal justice for all. I stand behind those men and women in blue who do the right thing every day. And I pray for healing for our city and our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Stolle". The letters are cursive and fluid, with the first name "Ken" and last name "Stolle" clearly legible.

Ken Stolle  
Virginia Beach Sheriff/High Constable