

From: Williams, John  
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 12:42 PM  
To: #All Staff - City Employees  
Cc: City Council  
Subject: All-staff message on current events

Good afternoon City staff.

Rather than my usual update on COVID-19 or city projects, today I would like to address the events we have seen in Minneapolis and the reaction that has swept across the nation. You may have read a shorter version of this in the City's e-newsletter, but I wanted to also send a few extra thoughts that apply directly to all of us as City staff.

The City of West Linn and the West Linn Police Department have joined voices across the nation condemning the tragic death of George Floyd. Mr. Floyd's senseless death is a stark reminder that violence, inequality, and racism against the Black community still exist everywhere in our country. Recent events in West Linn have underscored that we have many problems right here at home. The City of West Linn and the West Linn Police Department understand our key roles in addressing issues of racism and injustice in our own city and we are taking a number of steps towards rebuilding trust and accountability in our community. Actions underway include calling for and supporting independent investigations into our own practices; taking all necessary actions that may result from those investigations; completing diversity, equity, and inclusion audits, plans, and training for all City staff; and creating an independent police oversight task force.

But there is personal accountability required as well. Over the weekend the West Linn Police Department shared a statement from Acting Police Chief Peter Mahuna formally condemning Mr. Floyd's death and acknowledging the fear and distrust this incident has further instilled in members of our community, especially in people of color. Pete reinforced the expectation to his staff that each officer, regardless of rank, has the responsibility to intervene when another officer crosses the line. All staff in the Police Department are working hard with City Council and City Management to move toward providing more equitable, just, and accountable police service to earn back trust that has been lost in our own community.

I want to take this message and add to it, because it does not just apply to police officers. It applies to all of us. We all have a responsibility to do what's right, especially as government employees, but also in our personal lives. This includes stepping in and taking action when you see someone else crossing ethical or moral lines. So please, move outside of your comfort zone and take action if you see someone crossing those lines. If you cannot do this yourself, I want to make sure you know that the City maintains a fully independent ethics reporting firm website and hotline where you can make a confidential report on any City issue if you are not comfortable speaking to your supervisor, HR, or me.

We need to work together to make people of all races, colors, religions, gender identities, sexual orientations, political affiliations, abilities, and more feel safe, welcomed, and supported. It is up to all of us to make the world better, and it won't happen until we all step up and do our part.

Sincerely,  
John

John Williams  
Interim City Manager  
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