



Town Board Comments Regarding Racial Injustice

Post Date:06/11/2020 12:47 PM

During the June 8, 2020 regular Town Board meeting, The Town of Superior Trustees offered comments regarding the recent event of police brutality in Minneapolis and the ongoing state of racial injustice in the United States. This is a transcript of their comments that occurred within the 'Reports, Questions and Issues' segment of the Town Board meeting. A full video of these comments can be found at <https://youtu.be/6FUitlp9cVw> Move through the time markers to find each comment.

Mayor Pro-tem Mark Lacis: Comments begin at the 00:43 time marker

Black lives matter. Our country has a history of racism and systemic racism continues to exist. While we acknowledge that the Town of Superior is not particularly racially diverse, that does not excuse or allow us to be silent or complacent in the face of racial injustice. We must speak out. We must educate ourselves and teach our children. And, we must work to end institutionalized racism wherever we encounter it. Superior must be committed to making our community more inclusive and welcoming of all people. To that end, we have invited the Boulder County Sheriff to our next Board meeting on June 22 where I hope we can begin that conversation and discuss how the police can keep our community safe while respecting the fact that Black lives matter. I encourage you all to participate in that meeting and to write to the Town Board with your thoughts, your comments, your suggestions and what we can do to improve our community for all people. We are listening. Thank you.

Neal Shah: Comments begin at the 02:20 time marker

Two weeks ago the world witnessed a heinous act in Minnesota – this despicable act that has now been denounced by nearly everyone. This event has shined yet another light on an issue that has been persistent for decades within the African American community. As I laid face-down on the ground for nearly nine minutes during a protest at the state capitol last week, I was sobbing within minutes. Sometime later, I realized my position here on this Board would not be possible for it not for the sacrifices of my black predecessors around the nation. They fought so I could have a seat here among the handful of elected people of color in Boulder County. While Superior is a small town and I may not necessarily have the platform to advocate for the changes we need to

see at the state and national level, I can help and plan to do so with money and donations to the NAACP, the Urban League and BLM. Further, I want to emphasize that I personally believe the vast majority of law enforcement are really awesome people. Just as the rioters in downtown should not be lumped in with the peaceful protesters, the bad cops should not be lumped in with the vast majority that wear their badges with incredible integrity. Finally, a parting thought. The last couple of weeks have seen a number of people questioning their own biases and the racism that they themselves are unconsciously guilty of. Having been on the receiving end of some of this for my entire life, I have to say, keep educating yourself. Many folks will argue that they are not racist but in the same breath suggest that this town is full enough or the schools are at max capacity. Think hard about what that message sends to folks that don't yet live here or who are by extension allowed to live here. When a handful of people emailed this Board to suggest that there are already too many renters in town, I see it as an affront and I realize that we have a long way to go. Thank you.

Kevin Ryan: Comments begin at the 04:28 time marker

I appreciate Mark and Neal's statements over the recent events. I do, just incredibly touched and moved by the protesters who I stand in solidarity with. It is terrible. We as a nation, frankly, need to stop killing black people. This is a problem and I am grateful that the conversation appears to have reached a level where we are able to talk to our colleagues of all colors about this issue that has lived with us for a long time.

Ken Lish: Comments begin at the 09:32 time marker

I won't repeat much of what my colleagues have already said regarding the state of the race relations and law enforcement within our country right now. One thing I will add for those of us who are processing what type of action to take, how to feel and whatnot. A helpful exercise that I have found is to actually set aside time in our days. I know it's difficult as things run together, as most of us are still confined to our homes. But, take an hour. Set aside an hour and think about the state of affairs in this country and at the end of that hour actually put your thought to writing. Writing helps us act on our actions. Write down a sentence or two about how you feel and follow that up with two sentences about actions you are going to take to address those feelings and your thoughts and what we can do to improve the state of affairs in this country. I appreciate all the comments that have already been stated by my colleagues in that regard.

Laura Skladzinski: Comments begin at the 11:51 time marker

Hi everyone. I did not prepare a personal statement on the state of racism and inequality since I knew Mark was going to make that statement on behalf of the full Board. I do want the community to know that I stand behind everything he said. I am currently examining my own biases to understand exactly where I am on my own journey to become anti-racist and become an ally to the Black community. I would definitely welcome any suggestions from residents as to tactical actions that I can take to ensure Superior is an inclusive community as well as resources that you have found helpful. For my part, I want to encourage everyone to take five minutes to sit down with

your family and watch the YouTube video that is called “Understanding White Privilege through a \$100 race.” It uses the metaphor of a life as a race to explain white privilege so that even kids can understand it. As far as taking action, I know for me personally, it has been a little bit paralyzing to think of what a long way I have to go, but that is no excuse for not doing anything. I want to remind everyone there are so many lanes you can take and you don’t have to be in all of the lanes at the same time.

Sandie Hammerly: Comments begin at the 13:33 time marker

Good afternoon everyone. I wish I was as good of a public speaker as my colleagues, particularly Mark and Neal Shah. The thoughts that you shared are mine and I wish I was better at it. But, I can say that the situation in Minneapolis – I have never been so terrified to see anything on television as when I saw that. And, I remain open to listening so I can grow and become a better human being and help our country become stronger.

Mayor Clint Folsom: Comment begin at the 17:03 time marker

Good evening everyone. I want to thank all of my colleagues on your remarks on Black Lives Matter and the current events. I share these concerns and opportunities that you outlined in your remarks. As for some next steps on what we are doing here in Superior, there has been some considerable discussion locally and nationally encouraging every community to evaluate our law enforcement, its policies and procedures, to see where we can improve. As most people know, Superior does not have its own municipal police department. Instead we contract with the Boulder County Sheriff’s office for law enforcement services. From 1991 to 2004, I had the unique opportunity to serve as a volunteer with the Sheriff’s office as a reserve deputy. And from that experience and continued interaction with them to this day, I feel very confident about the quality of the individuals and the progressive policies this organization has for serving and protecting our residents. We have invited Sheriff Joe Pelle to our June 22nd meeting for an update and discussion with the Board. I will also be participating in a Metro Denver forum with other mayors and police chiefs on law enforcement, policing policies and reforms. Sargent Wolf, who supervises Superior’s law enforcement is going to join me on that call. Again, I want to thank everyone in the community for your concerns, your messages and your suggestions. Know that we are fully engaged in the dialogue and we want to be a part of the solution.

Sheriff Joe Pelle's Statement on the killing of George Floyd

The videos that I've seen of the killing of George Floyd are certainly sickening. The tactic used and the killing of this man violate the mission and values of the Boulder County Sheriff's Office (BCSO). Our first value at BCSO is that we "value human life."

Abuse of this kind must be held to a high level of accountability, and I was pleased to learn of their firing and the filing of charges. Our policy dictates that when a fellow officer witnesses abuse, they must intervene. In addition, neck restraints were done away with decades ago, and our policy clearly dictates that when resistance ceases the application of force must also.

We have heard the words of the protestors. Black lives matter. That is true in Boulder County and everywhere in the world. Enough is enough. There is no room for any law enforcement professional who is biased against any group of people to be a part of our profession.

I understand and even support the need to protest, we have facilitated that in Boulder County for decades. I am heart sick to see property being destroyed and people being injured in rioting. That does no honor to the victims of police violence.

Police agencies must do more to build relationships and trust with communities of color. Healthy personal relationships between police leaders and the culture brokers in our communities who represent the disenfranchised are the first steps toward building trust and respect.

When you are interacting with the BCSO, we want you to feel safe, no matter your race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgender status, or any other status. Should you find yourself speaking with a deputy, you should not fear for your life or suffer any discrimination.

Law enforcement and the community must work together to make changes that will engender trust and ensure a justice system that is fair and just for all. We will not stop until members of our community no longer fear those who are there to protect them.



BOULDER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Response to: #8Can'tWait

1

BAN CHOKEHOLDS & STRANGLEHOLDS

Deputies are not authorized to use choke or strangleholds to subdue a subject. Choke holds or strangulation techniques are not taught to Sheriff's Office employees.

2

REQUIRE DE-ESCALATION

The sheriff's office use of force training program instills in deputies the capability to assess the potential harm that might result from use of force actions and to use verbal de-escalation in lieu of force whenever possible. This is taught and reinforced in regular training; including defensive tactics, firearms, and scenario based training. Sheriff's Office employees are also required to immediately de-escalate force as the subject's level of resistance decreases. Additionally, we require that immediately following the use of force and placing the subject into custody, deputies shall evaluate and/or observe the subject for injury or complaints of pain resulting from the use of force and obtain any necessary medical care. In instances where a serious injury occurs during a force encounter, deputies are required to render aid, to the best of their physical ability, until relieved by professional medical providers.

3

REQUIRE WARNING BEFORE SHOOTING

Deputies are required to use advisements, warnings, and verbal persuasion, when possible, before resorting to the application of force, including firearms.

4

REQUIRE TO EXHAUST ALL ALTERNATIVES BEFORE SHOOTING

Deputies must either exhaust or eliminate from consideration all other reasonable options based upon the circumstances prior to resorting to the use of firearms, and then only when they reasonably believe that such use of a firearm is necessary to protect the deputy or another from the imminent risk of serious bodily injury or death.

5

DUTY TO INTERVENE

Employees who witness the use of force by any other deputy or peace officer that exceeds the level of force permitted by state statute are required to attempt to intervene and report any force that they believe is excessive as soon as practical to their supervisor.

6

BAN SHOOTING AT MOVING VEHICLES

Deputies are authorized to shoot at a moving vehicle in the following limited situations:

Discharging a firearm at an occupant of a moving vehicle is only authorized when the deputy is authorized to use deadly force against that occupant and the deputy reasonably believes that the risk to the deputy or others created by discharging a firearm is outweighed by the need to apprehend the suspect(s) without delay.

Discharging a firearm at a vehicle, whether or not it is moving, with the sole intent of disabling the vehicle, is prohibited unless the deputy is authorized to use deadly force against all occupants of the vehicle. In exceptional circumstances, using a firearm with the sole intent of disabling the vehicle may be the most reasonable action available and provide for the greatest safety to the public and/or deputies. Under these circumstances, a command level supervisor may authorize an action under this section be taken when necessary, whether in a planned or unplanned event, using weapon(s) specifically designed to disable vehicles.

7

REQUIRE USE OF FORCE CONTINUUM

Sheriff's Office policy provides a continuum of levels of resistance and force options, by broad classification, and through regular scenario based training (mostly based on real life encounters, both locally and nationally) teaches all deputies to evaluate a situation, de-escalate the situation if possible, and then use only the force that is needed to resolve the situation in the safest manner possible.

8

REQUIRE COMPREHENSIVE REPORTING

Any deputy who uses force is required to report the use of force to their supervisor as soon as practical and before the end of their shift. The deputy is also required to complete a thorough report documenting the use of force. Each use of force incident is reviewed by a supervisor who was not involved in the incident. Higher levels of force (Taser use in dart mode, strikes with a baton or other weapon, impact munitions, etc.) are reviewed by a command level supervisor. The reviewing supervisor determines if the use of force falls within Sheriff's Office policy, training, and state law. If the use of force was outside of policy or state statute then an internal investigation is initiated.



Important Links

[Link to Boulder County Sheriff's Department](#)

[Link to the Town Board meeting with Sheriff Joe Pelle's presentation and discussion of 8 Can't Wait, starts at 32:20](#)