



**June 12, 2020**

## **Message from the Mayor and City Council**

As the City Manager stated at our Council meeting this past Tuesday, the community will receive a full and transparent accounting of the recent events in the City of Fredericksburg. The Police Department is currently performing a formal and intensive review of how the agency responded to protests/demonstrations held between May 31<sup>st</sup> and June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The review will be complete this summer and, upon its completion, shared with the Department's [Citizen Advisory Panel](#), a group created in 2015 to facilitate two-way communication between the Fredericksburg Police Department and members of our community, and then made public.

The City of Fredericksburg has received numerous questions, comments, demands, and concerns (and compliments) during this time. However, we are unable to provide further information until this review and reporting is complete. Having said that, we believe it is important to generally share some basic information about our Police Department.

- First, last November, the Department was nationally re-accredited through the [Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies](#) (CALEA), an organization that sets the gold standard for public safety and provides a blueprint for best practices for law enforcement. The Department has been a nationally accredited agency since 2009 and, out of 340 law enforcement agencies in Virginia, only 34 agencies are CALEA accredited. Our Police Department would not have received this accreditation without a longstanding commitment to community relationship building. (i.e. Badges for Baseball, Midnight Madness, Breakfast Buddies, and partnerships with our social service agencies, and others.) Please contact Lt. Rashawn Cowles for more information about the accreditation process.
- Our Police Directives have been posted on our website since 2016, [available on the Fredericksburg Police website](#). Many of the internet campaign's recently launched [8 Can't Wait](#) initiatives are already enacted in Fredericksburg. For example, our directives prohibit officers from performing chokeholds or shooting at moving vehicles, require officers to de-escalate situations and report all uses of force to the Office of Professional Standards. In fact, the Department's [Response to Resistance directive](#) emphasizes the agency's commitment to de-escalation and only using a reasonable amount of force - when force is necessary. And Fredericksburg Police Officers must attend use-of-force training biannually, as well as anti-bias based policing training, verbal de-escalation training, and defensive tactic training annually. A formal response to [8 Can't Wait](#) is also underway.
- In 2014, the Department was the **first law enforcement agency in Virginia** to equip all officers with body-worn cameras. Body-worn cameras provide transparency, accuracy, and quicker resolution when citizen complaints arise, and hold everyone accountable for their actions.



Our Fredericksburg Police Department has made good progress with community policing, accountability, and transparency. We are certain with recent events locally, and with this pressing and very important national conversation, that there is more to be done. We are committed to continued improvement in all that we do, especially in our core responsibility to public safety.

Sincerely,  
Mary Katherine Greenlaw, Mayor  
William Withers, Jr., Vice-Mayor, Ward 2  
Kerry Devine, At-Large  
Matthew Kelly, At-Large  
Jason Graham, Ward 1  
Timothy Duffy, Ph.D., Ward 3  
Charlie Frye, Jr., Ward 4

Attachments:

[Resolution: City Council Message to our Community - June 2, 2020](#)

[City Manager's Message to the Community - June 6, 2020](#)

[Fredericksburg Youth Forum Event – June 10, 2020](#)