

From: David Zack <dzack@ashevillenc.gov>
Sent: 6/5/2020 6:04:45 PM
To: James Baumstark <jbaumstark@ashevillenc.gov>
Cc:
Subject: Fwd:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Debra Campbell** <dcampbell@ashevillenc.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 5, 2020 at 5:58 PM
Subject: Fwd:
To: David Zack <dzack@ashevillenc.gov>

Fyi!

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From: **Kimberlee Archie** <karchie@ashevillenc.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 5, 2020, 8:01 AM
Subject:
To: Debra Campbell <dcampbell@ashevillenc.gov>
Cc: Yashika Smith <ysmith@ashevillenc.gov>, Paulina Mendez <pmendez@ashevillenc.gov>, Nia Davis <ndavis@ashevillenc.gov>, Jaime Matthews <JMatthews@ashevillenc.gov>

The City of Asheville Office of Equity & Inclusion Call to Action

George Floyd's murder by Minneapolis police may be a moment of awareness, acknowledgment, shock, awe, or even despair for some. For most Black people and anti-black racism allies, this is a movement. The response to George Floyd's murder is a response to centuries of systemic racism and oppression. It can't be said enough.

For Black people, we lift up George Floyd, but we see so much more than George Floyd. We see every Black person who has died at the hands of state-sanctioned violence. We see our brothers, our fathers, our sisters, and ourselves. And we see how white supremacy culture and anti-blackness are upheld, not only in people's hearts and minds but in our institutions and systems. Black people haven't been able to breathe for a long time. We are suffocating, from daily microaggressions to disparities in wealth, health, education, and the criminal justice system.

WE. CAN'T. BREATHE.

And Black people unjustly killed by police or while in police custody like George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Atatiana Jefferson, Botham Jean, Stephon Clark, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Jamar Clark, Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, Walter Scott, Tamir Rice, Laquan McDonald, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner because their videos and stories went viral. There are so many more people we don't know about and who go unnamed. We mourn them. Their deaths are painful and personal reminders of the pervasiveness of inequity, of how undervalued we are; and how invisible our plight is to folks of privilege.

Horried. Appalled. Angry. Unhinged. Afraid. None of these words accurately describe the many emotions felt about a police officers' knee in the neck of a man, specifically a Black man, for over eight minutes, killing him. These unnamed feelings are equally felt for the three officers who did not intervene. Not only are we concerned for our own children, and family members, for ourselves and our

co-workers, we are concerned that the racial violence will continue and even escalate here in Asheville. This is more than a moment...it is a movement.

The work of the Office of Equity & Inclusion to train staff, to develop and use tools to analyze who benefits and who is burdened by City decision-making, and to compile and comb through data that demonstrates just how deep racial and social inequities are impacting community members is movement work. It is about moving City staff, managers and leaders, and elected officials to intentionally change the culture; and change the policies and the practices of local government to work for us all, not advantage a select few.

It's about moving the way we operate as a City government to a place where those who have been most negatively impacted by our decisions and/or the consequences of our decisions are regarded, valued, and included in our decisions.

It's about moving away from the normalized ways of doing things because of tradition and moving toward interrupting the status quo and normalizing equity as an embedded process and product for everything we do as a City government.

It's about moving away from policies, practices, and procedures that don't work for everyone, especially that harm and continue to oppress Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).

This is the time to move away from organizations, institutions, and systems built to advantage one group over another.

It's time to move away from militarized local police departments. It's time to move away from excessive use of force on BIPOC communities. It's time to move away from criminalizing skin color.

It is time to move away from white supremacy culture and all that comes with being acculturated in it. Buying into the belief that whiteness is right and everything else is wrong, or dirty, or dishonest, or stupid, or outside the norm ends now.

In cities all over this country and right here in Asheville, people are seeing the movement. Protests, demonstrations, rioting are all methods for communicating the dis-ease felt by oppressed people. Whether you agree with the tactics or not, listen to the messages. Those protesting are demanding a new normal. They want to see government move away from being oppressive and move toward equity, inclusion, and justice. **We cannot go back to the way things were. That way was never normal for everyone. We implore you to do something about the current state of affairs. Take action.**

First, increase your **awareness** of what has happened in the past and continues today to create and maintain racial inequities. We offer training for City staff and board and commission members. Or you can also participate in self-study, or other education activities in the area..

Second, build your **analysis** muscle. Practice asking critical questions that will allow for seeing perspectives of people in circumstances different from your own. Using this skill on a regular and intentional basis will build your ability to use an equity lens without much thought; it will become an invisible habit.

Third, take opportunities to **act**. Once you see inequities, it is impossible to walk through life with the blinders of only your perspective. Remember to be in solidarity with BIPOC communities, not get in front of them, erase them, or take action for them. "Action with" instead of "action for". Action can look like donating time and resources, organizing, supporting and speaking up. Leave white supremacy, saviorism, and patriarchy in the past.

Finally, the phase of accountability/ally-ship is about the traditionally oppressed groups and the traditionally oppressive groups working across and within groups for accountability in the work and to grow toward ally-ship.

Some quick actions we can take as a City government with a police department would be to:

1. Require officers to de-escalate situations, where possible, through communication, maintaining distance, slowing things down, and otherwise eliminating the need to use force.
2. Prohibit officers from using maneuvers that cut off oxygen or blood flow, including chokeholds or carotid restraints, which often result in unnecessary death or serious injury.
3. Require officers on the scene to intervene and stop excessive or unnecessary force used by other officers and report these incidents immediately to a supervisor.
4. Restrict officers from shooting at moving vehicles, which is regarded as a particularly dangerous and ineffective tactic.
5. Limit the types of force and/or weapons that can be used to respond to specific types of resistance and specific characteristics such as age, size, or disability.
6. Require officers to exhaust all other reasonable means before resorting to using a weapon/deadly force.
7. Require officers to give a verbal warning, when possible, before using serious force such as shooting, tasing, or pepper spraying someone.
8. Require officers to report each time they use force or threaten to use force (e.g., pointing a gun at a person).

This is an invitation to act; an invitation to use your position, power, and privilege to work in partnership with BIPOC communities to dismantle systems of white supremacy. Understand the urgency to begin, and accept that we're going to be here for a while.

"If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."

- Lilla Watson

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