



# Belleville Police Department

TOWNSHIP OF BELLEVILLE  
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## An Open Letter to the Township of Belleville,

Recent events in Minneapolis and Atlanta have affected our nation and our community very strongly and have resulted in peaceful rallies, violent protests and a demand to reform policing. I was personally offended by the videos of these police encounters that could have, and should have, been handled much differently, and without the loss of life. My job as Belleville's Chief of Police is not to fix these tragic events or the resulting civil unrest, but to lead the Belleville Police Department and commit our 100 officers to doing better.

Since becoming Chief in 2016, I have repeatedly told my staff that we can always do better. Today, I am telling the Township of Belleville and everyone who lives, works, shops, dines or visits our town that we **will** do better. Racism, bias, excessive force and all forms of police misconduct shall not be tolerated in the Belleville Police Department and I am dedicated to eradicating it.

Everyone knows that actions speak louder than words. As such, my staff and I shall implement the following changes to our policies, procedures and daily operations to ensure that police misconduct is addressed swiftly, that we are more transparent, and that we build on our already positive relationship with the community.

1. We shall post all use of force summaries on our website along with detailed explanations of the type of force employed, any injuries, and any weapon involved (baton, pepper spray, firearm, etc.). Additionally, unredacted use of force reports are available to the public upon request.
2. All police officers shall receive de-escalation training and implicit bias training as soon as it is available from our county prosecutor. This is in addition to the extensive training we already provide in Bias-Influenced Policing & Discriminatory Profiling, Ethics for Law Enforcement, Dealing with Emotionally Disturbed Persons, Cultural Diversity, Immigrant Trust, and Use of Force.
3. In accordance with the Attorney General's directive, we shall post the identities of officers and the circumstances surrounding any serious disciplinary infraction, including complaints of excessive force and racially influenced policing.
4. We shall develop and conduct the first-ever Citizen's Police Academy in Belleville to educate and partner with the community in addressing the most critical areas of law enforcement, especially the lawful use of force, cultural diversity, mental illness and crisis intervention.
5. We are currently soliciting quotes to equip our officers with body worn cameras and to install the necessary infrastructure to support and retain the body worn camera video.

6. Officers currently spend up to 10% of their shift doing community relations activities. I have directed that this be increased fivefold. Officers will now spend up to half of their shifts building and reinforcing relationships within our community.

The Belleville Police Department is an accredited law enforcement agency with a diverse staff of caring professionals. We are all committed to doing better every day and we encourage the public to hold us to the highest standards. If you know of any misconduct, excessive force or racial profiling, I encourage you to report it immediately to our Professional Standards Bureau at (973) 450-3383 or via our website at [www.bellevillenj.org/Departments/police-department](http://www.bellevillenj.org/Departments/police-department).

Very sincerely,



Mark Minichini

Chief of Police