

What I would do as Chief

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Police June 14, 2020

 Latest in a series of posts on the George Floyd killing 

Peter Crownfield is officially retired but spends most of his time working with students in his role as internship coordinator for the Alliance for Sustainable Communities–Lehigh Valley.

Gadfly:

(ref: **“If you were Chief, what would you do?”**)

I would immediately do some things that might help calm any doubts the public might have:

I would explain why earlier police killings of unarmed people were not worthy of comment. It's easy to condemn and denounce such a blatantly criminal act as the Floyd killing, but there have been many others, and many reported incidents have involve Black, Brown, and Indigenous people.

I would let the public know why Bethlehem needs a higher ratio of police to population than the median for cities in this size range. (Approximately 19.7 sworn officers per 10K people here, compared to 15.6 for cities with populations of 50K–100K.)

I would ensure that if there are any allegations of police misconduct, they will be made public and reviewed both internally AND by a qualified person or commission outside the department. If there have been any such allegations over the preceding 2 calendar years, whether reported formally or informally, I would also make a public report including a description of the findings.

I would establish a firm policy of not cooperating with ICE or other federal authorities unless there is a court-issued warrant (signed by a judge, not an administrative official).

Only then would I start looking at what processes might help strengthen and develop relationships with the entire community, especially poor

and minority residents. Since this is not an area where the police have expertise, I would start by discussing possibilities with knowledgeable people and community groups who might be able to help develop an effective process.

Peter

*Follower Deni Thurman-Eyer suggests we read **this story**.*