

Friends,

The last few months have brought a tidal wave of hardship – people around the world sick and dying from COVID-19, our economy in upheaval with millions thrown out of work, and the murders of George Floyd and other Black men and women. There is anger – rightly so – from Black men and women about how they are treated by law enforcement and by society as a whole. Collectively, we have a lot of work to do. What does that look like in action? Here are some initial thoughts:

- **Listen:** *an easy word to use but a hard term to implement.* All over our nation, in our state, and in our own city, countless fellow Americans are demanding that their voices be heard. Now, more than ever, those of us elected to serve in local government need to do that. This means asking people of color to continue to speak about their interactions with law enforcement and their experiences that, as a 60-year-old white male, I simply do not have. It means that those of us in government need to do a better – much better – job of truly listening to those voices. It also means listening to our community's police officers, understand their jobs and the stresses they face protecting our community, in order to effectively implement long-overdue systemic change.
- **Self-reflect:** *we should carefully examine what we are doing so we can do it better.* It is tempting in times like this to search for the quick solution or the ready slogan. But the real challenge is ahead of us if we want to achieve meaningful change. That requires everyone, especially those in positions of power, to reflect on our societal privileges in order to understand, and thus better serve, our communities. We must examine how we engage in policing in our community - in every aspect of our department's work - and we must include Black and other minority voices in our decisions in order to create sustained and fundamental change together. It means, collectively, carefully examining the relationship between our police department and the residents it serves. It's why I, along with a number of my colleagues, am calling for an in-depth review of our practices regarding recruitment, hiring, screening, training, advancement, and the removal of police officers.
- **Work together:** *we cannot take on this effort in silos or from the top-down.* We will not let destructive acts of a few distract us from our goal. We will not build a police department based on an "us versus them" mentality – the exact mindset that has led to where we find ourselves at this moment. We will not forget to include in the path forward those who get left behind when we assess the damage to our municipal budgets from COVID-19. Let's work as a team – as a community – to ensure that our actions, practices, policies, and budgets reflect our values.

This is a moment that is not only important for us but for our children and for theirs. How we act now will be felt by generations in Newton to come. I encourage you to contact me and your

other local elected officials with your opinions, concerns, criticisms and suggestions. We are listening, there is a lot of work to do, and we need your help.

Marc