



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF SCHENECTADY
NEW YORK

City Hall, 105 Jay Street, Rm 111
Schenectady, N.Y. 12305-1938
Office: (518) 382-5000
Cell: (518) 424-0483
Fax: (518) 382-5272
gmccarthy@schenectadyny.gov

Gary R. McCarthy
Mayor

For Release: Immediate
Date: July 9, 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Mayor McCarthy, Commissioner Eidens, Chief Clifford Announce Policy Changes

City officials implement policy changes after community leaders meeting

SCHENECTADY – Mayor Gary McCarthy, Public Safety Commissioner Michael Eidens, and Police Chief Eric Clifford, announced immediate changes to be implemented at the Schenectady Police Department. These changes were announced Wednesday afternoon during a meeting with the NAACP, members of the City Council, and Civilian Police Review Board (CPRB).

“The past four days have been especially trying times for residents and stakeholders in the City of Schenectady,” **Chief Clifford said**. “The events that have occurred nationally over the past month have made policing challenging for all police officers, who have worked through a pandemic and are currently working in an environment where the rules and best practices are rapidly changing.”

The following changes will be implemented effective immediately:

- The Schenectady Police Department policy will be updated to prohibit the use of a knee to a person’s head or neck as a control hold.
- The Use of Force continuum, that include at least 6 levels of steps, with clear rules on escalation, will be returned to the departments Use of Force Policy and immediately trained as a component of further de-escalation training.
- All warrantless arrests will be approved by patrol supervisors, who will be on scene to supervise all custodial arrests to assure that any force used is in compliance of departmental policy and local, state, and federal laws.
- The department will immediately seek the removal of police certification for any officer that is determined to use deadly physical force that is unwarranted by federal guidelines.
- The department will immediately begin discussions with the Civilian Police Review Board to explore changes that will serve to build public confidence. The department will support the agreed upon changes and request that the Schenectady City Council adopt them immediately.

“As an agency we are committed to the protection of life and property of all residents,” **Chief Clifford added**. “We are committed to building trust and serving our community. Although that level of trust is being questioned right now, we are committed to continuing to serve our community. We will continue to engage with children, young adults, residents, visitors, and our senior citizens. We are committed to helping those who suffer from substance abuse disorder find treatment. We are committed to reforming the police department to meet the vision of our community. We are committed to listening, trying to understand, and being fair, impartial, and transparent in everything that we do.”

“These reforms are just the beginning and as community conversations continue, additional reforms and changes will be made and immediately communicated to the public,” **Mayor McCarthy said**. “These are challenging times but as a community, together with Commissioner Eidens, Chief Clifford, and local community leaders, I am committed to ensuring we have a police department reflective of what the community wants, trusts, and is proud of.”

A full review of the entire incident on Brandywine Avenue is still being conducted by the department’s Office of Professional Standards, in conjunction with the Schenectady County District Attorney’s Office. Mayor McCarthy and Chief Clifford will have further information made available this week.