



Statement on La Marque Police Department

As the City Manager for the City of La Marque, I have far more duties than hours in the day. Most of those duties are enjoyable. The interactions I have daily with staff members, citizens, business owners, developers and folks in neighboring cities are unique, sometimes challenging, occasionally surprising, and always worthwhile. La Marque is the melting pot of Galveston County and in that our potential is unlimited.

Our nation as a whole has been spiraling for the last month from numerous events. I have previously issued a statement about the disgusting acts that occurred in Minneapolis. The humanity in me still cannot understand how something like that could happen. Yet, it did, and we have to find our way forward from there. This statement is not about those things. I am here to talk about La Marque, Texas.

In my role as City Manager, I am responsible for the day to day operations of our city government. That includes oversight over all city departments, including the La Marque Police Department. LMPD has the responsibility to protect and serve each and every citizen of this community. Most of you may not personally know our Chief or any of our officers. I do know them. I see their efforts and understand their struggles. Just as I have a responsibility to ethically and competently run the City, I, too, have a responsibility to each of them as well. That responsibility is the reason for this message.

Recently, we have seen much negativity towards police in general. Nationally, we have seen that negativity rise to the level of political assaults on law enforcement and physical assaults against good officers that have never done anything but put their lives on the line every day to protect the very people who did them harm. Again, my humanity cannot grasp that. These officers are men and women, just like you and I, they are sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, and aunts and uncles. They coach little league teams, pay taxes and worry about raising their kids in today's world, just like the rest of us. Quite simply, they are human, exactly like you and me.

When I first started here last year, I met with every officer and talked to them about expectations. Not only what I expected from them, but what they could expect from me as well. We didn't share those with the public because it was an interaction between employees and management. However, so that everyone in the City understands the administration's position on law enforcement, I think this is an appropriate time to share some of those expectations.



As the City Manager, I expect our officers to be respectful, truthful, knowledgeable and fair. I expect them to follow the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas, local ordinances, and all policies adopted by the governing body of the City of La Marque. I expect them to come to work each day, protect and serve and uphold the law, work hard for the people that pay their salary, and, just as importantly, to make sure they go home safe at the end of each shift.

In return for meeting those expectations, they get to have expectations of me as well. Those expectations include, among other things, that I work diligently to make sure that as a city we provide the proper equipment they need to do their jobs efficiently and safely, that we provide continuing educational opportunities to keep them competent in their jobs, and that we defend them when they do their job correctly.

And yes, as citizens, you have expectations of your police department as well. You have the right to expect them to be there for you when you need them. You have the right to expect your police department to be fair in doing their job and treat everyone equally under the law. You also expect the administration to ensure that if officers do something wrong, they will be held accountable for their mistakes.

In my first year here, I have reviewed numerous videos of interactions between our police department and citizens. Not once have I been shocked by the actions of our officers. In those interactions, I watched them be respectful when they were being screamed at. I have watched them stay calm in the middle of adversity. I witnessed them go above and beyond when the situation didn't require it. They have done their job with honor and commitment to service.

This week I will be meeting virtually with the entire department again. We will talk about recent events and reaffirm our expectations. We will reiterate our policy about zero tolerance for police brutality. Not because something happened in La Marque, Texas, but because of what happened in Minneapolis. Because they need to be able to express their disgust for that incident as well. Of course, that discussion will include what any officer who works for the La Marque Police Department, now or in the future, can expect if that policy is broken. Expectations should always be kept very clear.

I will also be reaffirming one of their expectations, and a promise I made to them. That promise is that when they do their job correctly, the administration will ALWAYS defend them. That includes me defending them publicly against false allegations of wrongful actions. That includes making sure that all evidence is reviewed prior to the assumption of wrongdoing and then defending our officers if none is found. That includes making sure that our officers'



right to due process is held just as important as that of those they protect us against. Their families deserve that too.

And I will reaffirm my expectation for them to go home safely at the end of each shift. I will make sure our officers know that I will not shirk from my duty as an administrator. I will ensure their commitment to serve and protect does not equate to a target on their backs based on national political motives or interest group agendas. They will never have fewer rights under my management than those that choose to break society's laws. They will know that I will defend all appropriate actions taken by them in the line of duty. As a city, we should expect no less for those that give so much.