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Mayor's Minute

July 13, 2016

A week like this last one makes me simultaneously even more thankful I live in Grandview, Texas while forcing me to realize how 'close' the world's problems are to our little town. More accurately, would be to say that, like it or not, these issues ARE 'our' issues. How so you may ask? "Grandview has no history of unlawful police violence. And Grandview has no riots. No police shootings," you may say. And thanks to many elements: the excellent temperament of our experienced police chief, the high quality and character of our officers...*AND*...the temperament and qualities of our citizens (of ALL races)...all of these various elements of Grandview make it tempting to categorize the recent questions over other cities police departments and the subsequent sniper shootings as "someone else's problem". But I assure you these issues also affect our community. Over the last week I have been approached by various citizens who have, one by one, or in small groups, expressed to me very divergent core fears and concerns over these issues. These issues are also 'our' issues.

For example, when police officers are randomly shot in Dallas...a mere 52 miles away...it will affect the hearts and minds of our own officers causing them to naturally revisit their commitment to remaining in their *chosen* career fields (decisions based on a sense of responsibility to their wives, children...and the very safety of their own lives). I know because I have been speaking with our officers over the last week (and I'm relieved and happy to say all who I have ridden with and spoke of these issues remain committed to staying in the police force). Still...to think that what happens in the greater world does not affect us would be inaccurate. Imagine, over the next ten years, when Grandview needs to hire new police officers...how will all of this effect the type of person who is willing, for very little money, to put on that uniform and serve our community? I can only hope and pray that men as well balanced, with gentle, fair but firm characters like the officers we now enjoy will continue to be willing to serve. The danger, to me, is that these types of shootings could create an atmosphere where such men will choose other career paths, leaving the police vacancies to be filled with a lesser character.

WHAT TO DO?

Whatever your position on these issues...please keep in mind that they DO effect our little town. We DO HAVE people in our own community who are afraid of the police. And our excellent police force WILL BE affected by what goes on in the greater world. One way of moving forward in a more positive mindset is to avoid the pitfalls I so often fall into: incorrect side taking. As long as we look at these issues as Minorities vs Whites, or Police vs Minorities, etc., we are committing a basic military error: whatever your position, by focusing on whoever we deem as 'The Enemy', we miss the real 'Threat'. **The enemy is any individual**—of any race, civilian or police officer—any person, **behaving outside the rule of law**. If the public (which includes us ALL) could see that this one situation—the breakdown of the rule of law— is dealt with fairly and firmly, we would realize we are ALL on the same side in ALL of the various angles of ALL of these situations. Whatever the breakdown is—be it a governmental official

physically abusing a citizen, or a high office holder revealing top secret information, or snipers shooting police—WE ALL WANT THE SAME THING: justice and a rule of law.

I challenge each of you...wherever you find your temperament regarding these issues...make yourself reach out to someone who may have a differing life experience and a different set of core fears. I challenge you to listen to them and let them know ALL of our concerns will be solved by ALL individuals in society being held accountable to the rule of law. I know, for me, when I had an officer point out this way of looking at these events and problems...this mindset actually cuts through a lot of the side taking that I can personally be guilty of doing. If you are a citizen of Grandview...I challenge you to say hello to one of our officers this week. Better yet...ask to ride with one for an hour. You may be surprised by the type person you are going to meet. If you are a conservative...seek out a liberal (or vice versa) and see if either of you can actually find fault in lumping us ALL into ONE SIDE in an attempt to address these issues with one solution: holding all equally accountable to the rule of law. And, if you are ANY citizen of any color, creed, political party, etc...PLEASE...stop one of our excellent officers and tell them what you think of the job they are doing. You WILL be impressed by the character, the intellect, and the overall quality of the person you will meet!

Sincerely,

Bart Clark