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June 16, 2020

STATEMENT OF INTENT REGARDING POLICE REFORM, RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The members of the New Paltz Town Board, who also serve as Police Commissioners, drafted the following statement of intent regarding police reform, racial equity and social justice. It was approved unanimously by Supervisor Neil Bettez, Councilwoman Alexandra Baer, Councilman David Brownstein, Councilwoman Julie Seyfert-Lillis, and Councilman Daniel Torres.

Over the past several months, magnified by COVID-19 and George Floyd's murder, we have all, once again, witnessed great and disproportionate injustice, racism and oppression in our communities. With the outrage so many of us feel on a national and global level, we must recognize the opportunity to take a hard look at how we perpetuate these systems right here in New Paltz, and we must pledge to make courageous and bold change so we can ensure equity and justice in our community.

The Town Board, in its own role and in its role as police commission, is unanimously and wholly committed to a timely, thorough and complete review and reformation of police policies, protocols, practices, and funding as needed to ensure that:

All of our citizens are treated equally and fairly under the law, and that our law enforcement agency is trained in understanding and eliminating racism and injustice in all of our policing policies and practices.

Our law enforcement agency's use-of-force practices are focused almost entirely on de-escalation strategies and that all officers are trained to utilize strategies that de-emphasize all forms of violence in carrying out their duties.

There is a complete and thorough review of the form and function of our police commission by an independent group to ensure that oversight of New Paltz's law enforcement agency is led by a competent, trained and representative group of elected and/or appointed community members.

Funding for the police and all Town of New Paltz social agencies is fully reviewed and reallocated as necessary to balance public care and safety with an equal desire to eliminate and reverse all forms of systemic racism and oppression, so that we serve all of our citizens truly equitably.

Governor Cuomo's recent executive order to "reinvent and modernize police strategies and programs with community input," mandates what the Town Board is willing and wanting to do - to work closely and collaboratively with our community of diverse citizens to reform and transform our police and other municipal entities. Everything in our municipality is "on the table" for reformation and transformation. We are committed to drive racial equity and social justice throughout our community.