



## ADMINISTRATION

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## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

June 10, 2020

I, like the rest of the country, was horrified by the events that took place in Minnesota. This is completely unacceptable and we need to make sure that we are doing all that we can to ensure that something like this doesn't occur again. As your Mayor, I want to assure you that I will not tolerate discrimination of any kind and that our entire municipal organization, including our Police Department, is committed to serving all of our citizens and guests with respect and professionalism.

This past weekend, Chief Gunther and I joined an event in Westmont where citizens gathered to express themselves on the topic of racial injustice. We want to thank the organizers for coordinating this vigil and forum. We are eager to participate and assist our citizens in exercising their First Amendment Constitutional right.

The Village has received several emails from residents and others inquiring about our police department's policies. Their concern is whether the police department is embracing reform and accountability mandates outlined by new national initiatives aimed at ensuring civilian safety. The Westmont Police Department already follows all of these protocols, either through State law, Department policy, or established Department best practices.

Chief Gunther signed the "10 Shared Principles" document on January 2, 2019, which was developed in cooperation with the Illinois Chiefs of Police Association and the NAACP. This pledge further defines law enforcement protocols to better ensure the safety of all citizens.

Our Police Department works actively throughout the year to engage with citizens and build trust-earned relationships, which ultimately results in effective and successful community policing. Some of these outreach programs include Citizens Police Academy, CPA Alumni Association, National Night Out, Westmont Police Department Open House, and Squad Car Night, as well as community service fundraisers such as paper shredding events, volleyball, movie night, and car washes benefiting Special Olympics Illinois, School Resource Officer program in our local schools, and a host of other programs.

Our Police Department participates in regular and on-going specific training regarding the important topics of Civil Rights, Constitutional and Proper Use of Law Enforcement Authority, Cultural Competency, Human Rights, Procedural Justice, and Use of Force. Currently, the Westmont Police Department is being reviewed as part of a state accreditation process to help ensure that our law enforcement organization adheres to the highest levels of excellence and established best practices.

Westmont Police officers have recently incorporated Crisis Intervention Training, a state sponsored 40 hours of instruction on methods of de-escalation, which increases positive outcomes in high-risk or mental health situations. Currently, 31 of 37 officers have completed this training.

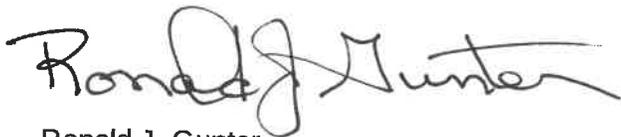
Westmont is one of only four agencies participating in a new pilot program, in cooperation with the DuPage County Health Department and the DuPage County Chiefs of Police Association. This program helps Westmont officers recognize individuals who are potentially experiencing a mental health crisis, and when appropriate, brings in social workers and health care professionals to address the issue and get necessary treatment to the individual more quickly.

Finally, the hiring process is a critical path through which the village can ensure police officers are committed to serving all of our residents to the best of their ability. Our Board of Fire and Police Commissioners consists of three appointed residents who have the responsibility of overseeing our hiring process. Candidates for hire experience rigorous testing, including polygraph examination, a thorough background investigation, comprehensive screening with neighbors and former employers, in-depth psychological evaluation, which includes a cultural competency and emotional stress analysis.

We understand there is always room for improvement. I can attest to the fact that Police Chief Jim Gunther and our Westmont Police Department are motivated to be the best they can be. With all of their training and continuing improvements, we are always challenging ourselves to be even better.

Police Chief Gunther and I have signed this letter together in order to express our unity in regard to this message. Westmont does not tolerate discrimination and we stand by our oaths of office to ensure that we serve all of our citizens fairly and equally.

Sincerely,



Ronald J. Gunter  
Mayor of Westmont



James Gunther  
Westmont Chief of Police