

Mayor and members of Council, good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you.

We are here to reveal the “new look” of the Haymarket Police Department, and to publically affirm what we commit to going forward, both individually and as a department. Everyone present is well enough aware of some of the past controversies associated with this Police Department. I make that singular mention of the past only to emphasize our full intent to keep it behind us as we move forward.

As we start a new year, we assemble to re-introduce to you, as the Council, and our residents, to the members of the Haymarket Police Department. **Your** police officers and staff. The sworn members are wearing their new uniforms. This is a more traditional look and I hope it gives the appearance of being more community-friendly. That isn't to suggest that any of these officers will be pushovers when the situation calls for steely resolve, and we must always be mentally prepared and trained to make appropriate, critical split-second decisions. But we understand and embrace the principle **most** encounters with the police can and should be mutually respectful, if not outright friendly. After all, we don't always meet the public at their best moments, and the national discourse in these times makes being a police officer more challenging than ever. Policing is front and center of a national debate, as we all have seen. It is not as simple as the “good guys – bad guys” calculation it once was.

To demonstrate our passion, we are prepared tonight to publically re-affirm the Law Enforcement Oath of Honor. When a police officer is initially sworn in, they take an oath of office similar to the one each of you affirmed upon taking elected office. That is generally viewed as a “one and done” oath. The Oath of Honor, which is promoted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, is uniquely tailored to policing, and meant to be re-affirmed periodically for maximum resonance. Unlike the oath of office, which the law **requires** us to take before assuming office, this oath is meant to be taken because we **want** to profess and embrace it. I have distributed to each of you the meaning of the words contained in the oath. As you can see, some of our family members have joined us to witness this; another testament to what it represents to us. After all, we depend very much on their support in our lives.

Before the oath is administered, it must be understood by all that it takes more than mere words to be meaningful. I want to be clear; this is more than symbolism and window dressing. Words in an oath do not, standing alone, make the difference. ... New uniforms do not, alone, make the difference..... A new police chief does not, alone, make the difference..... It requires a fundamental commitment that everyone here is ready to make. In fact, I am pleased to say I am already seeing it. We understand that trust and confidence must be earned. **Your** police department is committed to the ethical fundamentals, the commitment to duty, and to successfully earn the support of the residents and visitors to this community. We stand with conviction, and that is our pledge to this community tonight.