



CONSERVING THE PEACE THROUGH VALUES DRIVEN SERVICE / SHERIFF PAT GARRETT

Statement from Sheriff Pat Garrett related to the jail use of force incident on May 30, 2018:

This video is difficult to watch, particularly given the recent events and the national focus on law enforcement use of force. After seeing this video in 2018, we made the decision to refer it to an outside agency for an independent criminal investigation. At that time, the District Attorney reviewed the outside investigation and determined they did not have sufficient evidence to move forward. After reviewing that investigation, we concluded that there was no clear evidence of a policy violation.

Asking for a criminal investigation of a deputy's use of force was a very unusual step, one that few agencies take. Although the investigation found no misconduct at the time, we recognized we need to do better and implemented additional scenario training stressing de-escalation and verbal skills. For nearly a decade, the Washington County Sheriff's Office has trained on various types of de-escalation, specifically on advanced communication and team-oriented tactics, and we will continue to stress the need to avoid force if possible.

We are keenly aware of the need to continuously improve and evaluate our use of force tactics. The public bestows a tremendous amount of power and trust in law enforcement, and we must earn that trust every day. The past two weeks make it clear that the public demands change and accountability from law enforcement agencies. As your Sheriff, I cannot promise that I will never make mistakes. I can promise that I and the Washington County Sheriffs' Office will do our best to learn from our experiences, listen to the community, and work tirelessly to continuously improve.

-Sheriff Pat Garrett