

Minute Regarding the Killing of Corey Ruiz, 9/25/26

The Madison Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) grieves the killing of Corey Ruiz, a Black/Latino man, on July 22nd by a Madison police officer. We recognize the pain his family must be feeling, and we understand that his death affects not only his loved ones, but the entire Madison community. We wonder, along with Corey's thirteen-year-old daughter: "What if the police had never been called? What if they let him go? What if they had de-escalated the situation?"

Madison Friends Meeting recognizes that all human life is sacred and Friends strive to live in the "virtue of that life and power that takes away the occasion of all wars," including violence in all its forms. We all deserve a community where we do not have to live in fear of police violence, and where we can expect to be treated with respect and dignity. This is especially critical for those in our community who identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color, who have more likely been impacted by police violence. These harms and the resulting trauma for victims and their families is generational in nature, compounding the problem and underlining the importance of resolving it.

Policing is a very difficult job and the police themselves are at risk of emotional and spiritual harm when they use lethal force against civilians and when they are repeatedly exposed to situations in which they face the risk of physical harm. We are pleased that the City of Madison recently authorized a US Department of Justice grant for wellness and resiliency services, and Peer Support Team training for Madison police officers. We need to provide our police with the moral, psychological and spiritual support they need to ensure a safe community.

Corey Ruiz's tragic death illustrates that Madison's Police Department officers are not consistently utilizing de-escalation techniques and alternatives to the use of deadly force, particularly when interacting with people whose challenges have not been met by our community. We regret that this is reflective of a larger social pattern of depending on violence to solve problems.

Fortunately, hundreds of community members have been working to improve independent oversight and public accountability of the Madison Police Department (MPD) over the past 15 years. We ask the Madison Common Council, Mayor, and Madison Police to review all 177 of the recommendations contained within the Madison Police Department Policy & Procedure Review Ad Hoc Committee Report (October 18, 2019) and ensure they are being implemented in everyday policing.

We especially call on the Madison Police Department to follow its own Standard Operating Procedure which calls for "resolution of conflicts through the use of communication skills, crisis intervention, and de-escalation tactics..." Training and preparation emphasizing these procedures improves their ability to deal with potentially dangerous situations, decreasing the risks of violence against themselves and against the population in the exercise of their functions.

Additionally we call on Mayor and Common Council:

- to fully investigate the killing of Corey Ruiz and lawfully order the Chief of Police to fully cooperate with the Independent Police Monitor (IPM) investigations into the death of Corey Ruiz in parallel with the investigations of the WI Dept of Justice investigation;
- to support a strong IPM, who should have full access to all reports and videos of encounters between police and civilians in order to hold our police officers accountable and promote improved training and operating procedures, consistent with best practices;
- to require the use of body cameras by police and guarantee that the independent police monitor has full, unfettered access to the unedited camera footage;
- to increase funding for the Community Alternative Response Emergency Services Team ([CARES](#)) so that it can operate 24/7; and increase funding for additional training for Madison police officers in how to respond to persons who are experiencing mental health and substance abuse crises;
- to remove the occasion for violence in our community by providing more comprehensive mental health and substance abuse services, affordable, safe housing, food and other material support for persons of low income.

As Quakers, we believe that people and institutions are capable of change, of growth. We pray that Corey Ruiz's tragic death accelerates and continues the work so many people have done over the past 15 years to create systemic change in our policing and community support systems to make our city safer for all.