



NEWS RELEASE

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City of South Fulton Government

South Fulton Resolution Limits Use of Force and Outlines De-escalation Steps

(City of South Fulton, GA – August 26, 2020) – South Fulton is improving law enforcement integrity and police interaction with the community through new policies that limit use of force and put steps in place to help de-escalate tense situations and require officers to file a report each time they draw a weapon.

“Amid times of the civil unrest, it’s important we continue to improve our use of force protocols,” said Mayor William “Bill” Edwards. “These ordinances aim to increase accountability and transparency within the city as well as provide additional tools for investigations. Our goal is to ensure the safety of South Fulton citizens and police officers.”

The City of South Fulton City Council unanimously approved an ordinance that will help improve the city’s use of force policy and enhance the safety of South Fulton residents and police officers.

Inspired by 8 Can’t Wait, a national campaign that studies police policies proven to curtail police violence, the resolution bans chokeholds and strangleholds; prohibits officers from shooting at moving vehicles; and requires officers to exhaust reasonable alternatives before firing weapons.

It also requires comprehensive reporting, warnings before weapon use, use of de-escalation practices, intervention by officers who witness other officers using excessive force and reasonable use of force protocols to help ensure the use of only enough force reasonably necessary to defend and/or make an arrest.

The council also unanimously approved a police weapon accountability resolution that establishes a policy for the drawing or discharging of weapons.

The ordinance requires officers to file a report every time they draw a gun, mace or taser while on duty, even if the item is not discharged. The report will also identify the incident type, location, whether the item was discharged and age and race of the individual who the item was drawn or discharged against

Both resolutions take effect Sept. 24. This comes approximately two months after the city equipped officers with holster sensors that activate body cameras as soon as the officers draw their weapons.

“This technology helps officers who have to pull their weapon quickly,” said Police Chief Keith Meadows. “An officer may forget to turn on their body camera that is why the automatic sensor technology is extremely important for us.”

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The holster sensors are connected to officer's patrol cars. When an officer drives within a certain distance of a reported emergency, his or her body camera will record footage automatically. The body camera will also start recording if an officer is lying on the ground.

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