

Thank you for your email expressing concern, and disgust, over the recent incident involving our police department and a 10-year old boy.

When I was first informed of the incident, I was appalled, sickened and very upset over what I learned. Without having any detailed information, I immediately called for the Immediate Suspension With Pay for the two officers involved, due to the nature and seriousness of the incident, until I could learn all facts. Not only was I concerned for the 10-year old but, I had to insure fairness to all parties concerned. (I believe, if you were involved with some type of questionable activity, you would want to be treated fairly as well, until proof was received otherwise.)

Please let me assure you, I will not tolerate unnecessary treatment, punishment or roughness by any of our city employees in the performance of their duties, unless circumstances warrant such activity. And, my first reaction to this particular situation is that it was not warranted.

Let me also assure you, I will put our Police Department up against any other department within the State of Indiana. I have required our officers to attend additional schooling, training (both "hands-on" and Classroom), which includes hours of training with the latest equipment used on a daily, or as necessary basis. Several of our officers are college graduates with degrees in Criminal Justice, etc. However, I can not control or guarantee the actions of every individual on any given situation, nor can I control their human reaction to any incident. I wish I could! I can only rely on the fact that they have been afforded proper training and have the common sense to put their training to good practice.

My first reaction to this incident is these officers did not use good judgment and, perhaps, let their emotions get in the way of proper actions. But, this has not been proven at this time. I have ordered a full investigation by the Martinsville Police Department, to see if any departmental regulations have been violated, and turned the full investigation over to the Morgan County Sheriff's Department and Morgan County Prosecutor, for a full and thorough investigation to include the possibility of criminal charges being added.

If, indeed, the investigation by the Martinsville Police Department shows a violation of departmental rules and regulations, the recommendation by the Police Chief will be given to the Mayor and Board of Works who will possibly issue additional penalties to the officers involved. These additional actions could result in Immediate Suspension Without Pay, Demotion in Rank to Fully Discharged from the Martinsville Police Department. Then, pending final investigation by the Morgan County Sheriff's Department and Morgan County Prosecutor, additional charges could be placed to include criminal charges.

If, at the end of the Department Investigation, it is proven that the officers did not have sufficient cause to slap or tase the 10-year old, additional penalties will be issued by the Mayor and Board of Works. This decision should be reached by next Monday or Tuesday, after contacting all parties involved. The only reasons I can think of, that would warrant such treatment, would be if the 10-year old had access to weapons or something that could cause immediate harm to himself, or others involved. This action will not hinder the thorough investigation underway by the Sheriff and Prosecutor's Office.

Again, let me reassure you, I will not tolerate such unnecessary actions by our police department. Further, I

strongly feel this incident does not reflect the normal practices of our other fine Officers. Martinsville is a great community and, I intend to see that it stays that way! Thank you.

Mayor Phil R. Deckard

(P.S. -- Please feel free to contact my office with sensible comments and/or suggestions.)