

Statement on Filing of Lawsuit

January 5, 2023

Today marks the two-year anniversary of when tragedy struck the City of Newton. That tragic incident left behind a grieving family, poignantly distraught police officers, and a disquieted Police Department and community.

The family of Michael Conlon, the man killed in the officer-involved shooting that day, has initiated a wrongful death lawsuit against the City of Newton and the officers involved. This lawsuit comes after a fair, impartial and transparent inquest presided over by the Honorable District Court Judge Jeanmarie Carroll.

Having reviewed the evidence, facts and circumstances of what happened on January 5, 2021, Judge Carroll found that when Newton Police Officers fired their weapons, any reasonable law enforcement officer in the same position would reasonably believe that fellow officers as well as others were in imminent danger of being seriously injured or killed. The Judge wrote, "At that moment no reasonable alternative existed, except for the use of deadly force."

As part of the ongoing healing process, it is important to understand that critical life or death situations such as this occur in a split second. Lethal force decisions are what every police officer prays they will never be forced to make and trains to avoid. The primary officers that were on scene that day were and are fine members of the department - professional and compassionate.

As the Mayor of Newton and as the Chief of the Newton Police Department, we know the death of anyone in such circumstances is tragic, and there is a lot of healing that must take place for all of those impacted by this incident. Our hearts go out to the Conlon family as well as to our officers and their families.

Mayor Ruthanne Fuller
Police Chief John Carmichael