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THE NAVAJO NATION

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Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., Farmington Mayor Bill Standley discuss June 10 shooting of 21-year-old Clint John by city officer

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., and Farmington Mayor Bill Standley met here last Thursday to discuss concerns about a fatal shooting of a Navajo man June 10 at the Farmington Wal-Mart store.

Clint John, 21, was shot and killed by a Farmington police officer who was responding to a domestic violence call.

Following an investigation of the shooting, the San Juan County District Attorney's office found that Officer Shawn Scott was justified in the shooting and said that he will not face criminal charges. When Officer Scott responded to a call to the store's parking lot, he found Mr. John and a woman identified as his girlfriend fighting. When Officer Scott tried to intervene, authorities said, Mr. John turned on him, wrestled the officer's police baton away and threatened the officer. Officer Scott shot Mr. John four times.

Thursday's meeting was the first briefing President Shirley has received from Farmington city officials. The mayor was accompanied by City Manager Bob Hudson, and Rob Meyes, his assistant. Also attending was OPVP Chief of Staff Patrick Sandoval, Samson Cowboy, director of the Navajo Division of Public Safety, and OPVP staff assistant Andrew Tso.

The two leaders agreed to keep a dialogue going between them and to keep city and Navajo Nation residents informed. They will remain in contact to discuss reports and claims of tension since the shooting.

Mayor Standley described the incident and the Farmington police response for President Shirley. Questions were answered about the Farmington Police Department's cultural sensitivity training. The Mayor said Farmington hired a former Navajo official who works with city departments and businesses to promote cultural understanding and awareness.

A second meeting is scheduled for the leaders to meet in July. President Shirley acknowledged Mayor Standley's proactive approach to improve racial relations through the 2001 creation of a Citizen Advisory Police Commission. The commission has authority to investigate matters of alleged police misconduct and other unfair treatment of citizens.

The mayor said he initiated a range of city programs to bring more cultural sensitivity to government offices and businesses in Farmington. In 2001, he renovated a building to serve as a winter shelter from November to April to reduce the incidence of exposure-related deaths. Since the program was started, not one life has been lost.

The Mayor has described the “Train the Trainer” program for sensitivity training. As a result, more Navajos are employed in Farmington with many promoted to supervisory position, he said.

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