

# **CITY OF SPOKANE USE OF FORCE COMMISSION**

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March 8, 2015

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MAYOR'S OFFICE

**Mayor David A. Condon  
City of Spokane  
Spokane City Hall  
808 West Spokane Falls Boulevard  
Spokane, Washington 99201**

Dear Mayor Condon:

On February 13, 2015, the City of Spokane Use of Force Commission received the two year update from Spokane Police Department (SPD) Chief of Police Frank Straub and you on the progress that has been made in implementing the twenty-six recommendations contained in our final report. In all respects, we are impressed with the intentionality and diligence of the efforts made by the SPD, the City Attorney's Office, and your office to implement our recommendations. As we always anticipated, it has not been possible to follow each recommendation exactly as it was written. Due to limitations of time, expertise, and staff support it was not possible for us to, for example, assess the fiscal or human resource implications of each of the recommendations. Nevertheless, the vast majority of our twenty-six recommendations have been followed to the letter of the law, and in all other instances the spirit of our recommendations has been embraced to drive improvement.

A fair amount of conversation occurred between Chief Straub and the Commission at the two year meeting regarding the implementation of Recommendation 1 (Conduct a culture audit of the SPD). In our six month report letter we commended the Chief and his leadership team for engaging in a great deal of activity aimed at improving the culture of the department, but we noted that we didn't consider that activity to be a substitute for the audit called for in the recommendation. Thereafter, in our one year report letter we noted that Chief Straub expressed the belief that the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services review was going to include a departmental culture audit. Although the COPS review gathered feedback from police officers and the community regarding the state of the SPD, it did not carry out a culture audit of the department. It is the case that the audit has not been done and it appears as if there are no current plans to carry out the type of audit envisioned in our original recommendation. However, we do not consider this to be a significant failure on the part of SPD leadership to comply with Recommendation 1. Chief Straub expressed at the two year meeting that his nearly two and a half years in office and the many efforts

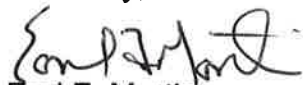
he has undertaken to improve the department's organizational culture have enabled him to gain the type of insights into the department that we envisioned a cultural audit would deliver. We take Chief Straub at his word on this and defer to his judgment whether or not a formal culture audit of the SPD would still be a cost-effective undertaking.

We are sure it is no surprise to you that the Commission received public comment that was critical of the scope of authority possessed by the Office of the Police Ombudsman and the Office of Police Ombudsman Commission. Harkening back to our one year report letter, while the recent reforms in this area do not go quite as far as what we presented in our "Citizen Oversight" recommendations, they are the product of negotiation and do advance the cause of independent, vigorous citizen oversight. We trust that you will continue to pursue ever greater autonomy and authority for both the Police Ombudsman and the Ombudsman Commission.

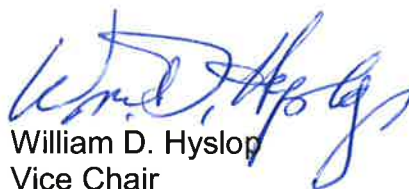
In filing this letter, the Use of Force Commission completes its work. We are very pleased to see the many initiatives being undertaken to make Spokane a more welcoming and safe community for all. The SPD and your administration are to be congratulated for much of this. More and better use of force policies, training programs, and practices are in place than was the case in February of 2013. Resources have been allocated to new tools and activities that are enabling SPD officers to be better prepared to carry out their duties in ways that generate and maintain community trust. The entire chain of command, from the patrol officer to you, is better positioned to respond fully and transparently to instances where concerns arise about an officer's use of force. We take great satisfaction in having contributed to these improvements. We look forward to Chief Straub and you continuing to enhance the ability of the SPD to render professional and faithful service to the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the City of Spokane and its citizens as members of the Use of Force Commission.

Sincerely,



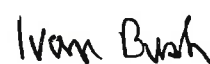
Earl F. Martin  
Chair



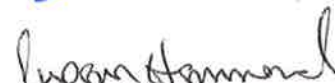
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