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August 31, 2017

Director Jacqui MacConnell
Spokane Police Division
1100 W. Mallon Avenue
Spokane, Washington 99260

RE: R17-06 – Uniform policy for release of community impact cases to the public

Dear Director MacConnell,

In the past year, my review of citizen complaints have yielded examples of cases that should be considered for release to the public. Cases of officer misconduct are of particular interest to the community when the alleged misconduct is directed at community members. However, the details of the cases and related body worn camera footage were released after the public made a public records request.

The first case was filed with Internal Affairs in January 2016 but was released to the public in February 2017.¹ The second case was filed with my office in January 2017 and released to the public in May 2017.² To the average citizen, who may only pay attention to news headlines, it would appear that SPD had two newsworthy cases of misconduct only 3 months apart.

SPD should release community impact cases to the public in a timely manner. This will foster trust between the public and SPD. It signals to the community that SPD's leadership will act accordingly when these instances arise. Furthermore, this would more accurately reflect when SPD receives community impact cases. Thus, I recommend SPD create a uniform policy that provides guidance to SPD on when and how to publicly release community impact cases.

Sincerely,

Bart Logue
Police Ombudsman
Office of the Police Ombudsman, City of Spokane

¹ Ryals, Mitch, *Spokane Police Department takes a 'big step backward' regarding transparency*, Inlander, February 27, 2017.

² Ryals, Mitch, *SPD officer under investigation after grabbing handcuffed man at the throat*, Inlander, May 1, 2017.