



SPOKANE POLICE DIVISION

CRAIG N. MEIDL
CHIEF OF POLICE

Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C18-021 OPO Number: N/A
Date of Complaint: 3/21/2018
Allegation: Standard Violation 3.8
Chain of Command Finding: Unfounded
Final Discipline: Not Applicable

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

An SPD detective reported that an Internal Affairs employee made inappropriate statements to a former SPD employee immediately following an Internal Affairs interview. The statements allegedly referred to the person being a young female officer who should drop her complaint.

COMPLAINT

The allegation is a violation of Standard 3.8: Members of the Spokane Police Department shall not allow their personal convictions, beliefs, prejudices, or biases to interfere unreasonably with their official acts or decisions.

INVESTIGATION

As the complaint involved Internal Affairs personnel, the City's Human Resource Department investigated the complaint.

The complaint stemmed from another Internal Affairs complaint (see C18-005). In that complaint, the SPD detective alleged that another SPD officer had advised a potential employer not to hire his relative. The complaint was determined to be unfounded. During that investigation, Internal Affairs (IA) interviewed the complainant's relative, a former SPD officer who now worked for a different law enforcement agency.

After the interview, IA personnel explained the next steps to the relative, telling her that the investigation would involve speaking with additional SPD officers and contacting officers from the agency where the relative was recently hired. As the relative had not filed the complaint herself, the IA employee asked the relative if she had considered the personal impacts as the investigation continued and her new employer was contacted, because it could be a difficult situation for her as a trainee. The IA employee recognized that this question might seem controversial, but felt it was important to ask. Internal Affairs did not want to inadvertently create issues for the relative with the new employer.

The IA employee explained that if the relative did not want IA to contact her current employer, IA would conduct the investigation as thoroughly as possible without their participation. The relative was not sure what she wanted to do at the time. The IA employee ended the conversation saying that if IA reached out to her new employer, they would notify the relative first and she could make her decision at that time. However, the IA employee made it clear that the IA investigation could and would still proceed investigating the allegations without contacting her employer if that were the relative's choice.

CONCLUSION

The Human Resources investigator wrote that, based on the witness interviews and documentation, there were no violations of the Policy Manual or Law Enforcement Code of Ethics by the IA employee. Human Resources did not find supporting evidence or testimony that the supervisor interfered unreasonably in the investigation. While the statements may have been controversial, there was no evidence to suggest that the IA employee made the statement with the intent of making her "drop the complaint." The IA employee stating IA's intent to complete the investigation with or without involvement from the employee's new agency suggests the comments were made with the intent to provide the employee with an alternative perspective of the situation and options. As the employee was not the complainant in the investigation, the IA employee's concerns were valid and do not amount to a violation of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics.

The allegation was determined to be unfounded.