



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT

CRAIG N. MEIDL
CHIEF OF POLICE

Closed Case Summary

Complaint Number: C20-064 OPO Number: 20-41
Date of Complaint: 7/13/2020
Allegation: Policy Violation
Chain of Command Finding: Not Sustained
Final Discipline: Not Applicable

INCIDENT SYNOPSIS

The complainant emailed a Spokane City Councilwoman regarding Facebook posts made by a user going by the profile "CK Bowden." The complainant claimed he knew this person to be a Spokane Police Officer, who had posted "racist" messages when he criticized the Black Lives Matter organization.

COMPLAINT

The complainant alleged a violation SPD Policy 1060: Employee prohibited speech and misuse of social networking.

INVESTIGATION

The Internal Affairs investigator reviewed all of the posts. He was unable to conduct citizen interviews, as the complainants did not respond to requests for an interview. The investigation involved an officer's free speech while off-duty. The officer attempted to keep his professional identity hidden while discussing a matter of public concern on a forum. At no time did he identify himself with the Spokane Police Department or express his opinions as a police officer.

The chain of command noted that it was a situation of a Spokane citizen choosing to discuss a matter of public concern with another citizen. That was his right as a citizen, and the department would have no interest in that exchange. As detailed in the IA investigation, the complainant was able to look at "CK Bowden's" profile and deduce that it was in fact a Spokane Police Officer. With that information in hand, he forwarded it onto the Councilwoman, who made a complaint. The chain of command determined that the officer did not violate the policy.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The alleged policy violation was determined to be Not Sustained.