



## **Mayor Nadine Woodward**

March 13, 2023

Spokane City Council  
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd  
Spokane, WA 99201

Councilmembers,

The community has been consistent in its expectation that the Spokane Police Department adopt a community policing model that includes robust community engagement. That expectation includes members of the department seeking and engaging with all perspectives to gain an appropriate, balanced, approach to keeping our neighborhoods safe.

For that conversation to work, all perspectives must be considered and respected. In the immediate instance, that includes who and how department members and leadership engage, how information is shared publicly, and the timing of that information.

My review of the report and subsequent conversations with the chief lead me to conclude that he was seeking to engage a group in the ongoing community dialogue about policing that had been heavily affected by the rise in crime throughout the downtown core. I support his continuous work and community responsiveness to keep our city safe in the face of ongoing challenges that have increased crime and impacted businesses.

Let me directly address the findings and recommendations in the report titled "Office of the Police Ombudsman Independent Investigation Closing Report" dated and published on December 12, 2022. After six months of investigation and 31 interviews, the Ombudsman concluded that no policy violations were committed and made five recommendations related to policy and practice.

I have instructed the police department staff to adopt each of the five recommendations to ensure written policy informs practice and training accurately implements the policy. The policy dealing with requests for information should clearly address expectations for the inclusion or omission of the identity of the requestor.

*The City of Choice*

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Additionally, I am directing that the policy governing public viewing and release of body-worn camera video in all cases, including use-of-force incidents, be consistently applied to eliminate competing expectations and practices. Technical issues related to the case management system should also be immediately addressed to accurately reflect case progress and eliminate inconsistencies in how it is characterized.

Finally, I am in Washington, DC this week meeting with other mayors from across the country who are involved with public-safety related community engagements in their cities. Separately, I'm meeting with representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice COPS program, which the City engaged with a few years ago to provide technical assistance on the topic. Their outside perspectives and advice will be invaluable as we work together toward the shared goal of a police department that continuously evolves to meet the needs of the community it serves.

Taking these steps will set clear expectations regarding release of information and improve the level of consistency and understanding of their application. It will also continue our practice of learning from other communities and subject-matter experts.

I share the chief's expectation that the department, City Council, and community engage all perspectives presented so that the department can continue evolving. Requests from the community are received, regularly, by the City, including the offices of the Mayor and City Council. It is common practice for those inquiries to be forwarded to the appropriate divisions and departments with a request for follow-up. That practice is part of the City's customer service expectation and community responsiveness.

The report included, as supporting examples, follow-up requests from the chief to investigate, fix technical challenges, and gain clarity as to why officers didn't follow up on initial calls. Emails sent by the department were responses and responsive to feedback as would be expected. The frequency and volume of emails was driven by the amount of community-initiated correspondence.

My expectation is that we never stop listening and improving. The steps I have outlined above will help us better do both.

Sincerely,



Nadine Woodward  
Mayor

cc: Bart Logue, Ombudsman  
Ombudsman Commission  
Johnnie Perkins, City Administrator

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