



August 11, 2020

Superintendent David Brown
Chicago Police Department
3510 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60653

Dear Superintendent Brown,

As you are aware, the August 9, 2020, non-fatal officer involved shooting in the 5600 block of South Aberdeen involved members of the newly created Community Safety Team (“CST”) who had not been issued body worn cameras (“BWC”), which is of great concern to COPA.

In a July 27, 2020 press release, the Department described the CST as “designed to partner with Chicago’s communities to address violence, neighborhood concerns and ongoing conflicts The CST consists of nearly 300 officers who will not only be deployed to hot spot areas in the city, but also work with community-based organizations, faith leaders and residents to address violence The team works closely with District Commanders to deploy to areas that may need additional support or to specific locations based on crime trends and historical data.”¹

The Illinois Law Enforcement Officer Body Worn Camera Act (“Act”) and the Department’s Special Order mandate that officers issued BWC electronically record law enforcement related encounters with the public that occur while the officer is on duty.² The Act and Special Order were implemented to help build the public’s trust in law enforcement and specifically, the Department. Further, the Special Order is clear in its intent that any officer engaged in field duties, such as those assigned to the newly formed Community Safety Team, should be issued a BWC. Had members involved in the August 9th shooting been issued BWC, the law, echoed by the Special Order, would mandate that those cameras “be turned on at all times when the officer is in uniform and is responding to calls for service or engaged in any law-enforcement encounter or activity that occurs while the officer is on duty.”³ The absence of BWC

¹ Chicago Police Department. (July 23, 2019). *CPD Announces Launch of Two New Citywide Teams with Focus on Strengthening Community Partnerships* [Press Release].

² 50 ILCS 706/10 and Special Order S03-14 Body Worn Cameras.

³ The mandate of CST appears to focus on police activity that could be described as a Community Caretaking Function (*see* Definitions (XII(D)) in Special Order S03-14: A task undertaken by a law enforcement officer in which the officer is performing an articulable act unrelated to the investigation of a crime. “Community caretaking function” includes, but is not limited to, participating in town halls or other community outreach, helping a child find his or her

by members of the Department who are engaged in the performance of law enforcement activity undermines the objectives behind the Act and Special Order, serving to erode the very trust they were designed to foster.

In May 2019, COPA issued an Advisory to the Department of its growing concern that members who had been assigned BWC routinely failed to activate their equipment when it is clearly required. By way of illustration, COPA's Advisory highlighted this failure relative to several officer involved shooting incidents. COPA acknowledges the Department's significant efforts to pursue an effective and transparent body-worn camera program and its "unwavering commitment to build trust and transparency with the residents..." as stated in your response to COPA's Advisory. However, absent the full deployment of BWC to its sworn members, the Department is at odds with the Act and risks a regression of gains to build the public's trust, particularly following an officer's use of force.⁴ While we recognize that the Department is in the process of reorganizing, as well as exploring the acquisition and roll-out of additional BWC equipment to units and teams involved in field activities, the August 9th shooting highlights the need for interim solutions to promptly equip all members assigned to field activities that involve law enforcement engagement. This effort should extend beyond CST to other similarly situated units and teams that are known by the Department to engage in field duties involving law enforcement activity.

Thank you for your consideration. COPA looks forward to the Department's response.

Sincerely,



Sydney R. Roberts
Chief Administrator

cc: Eric Carter, First Deputy
Dana O'Malley, General Counsel
Karen Konow, Chief, Bureau of Internal Affairs
Susan Lee, Deputy Mayor

parents, providing death notifications, and performing in-home or hospital well-being checks on the sick, elderly, or persons presumed missing, and thus not requiring BWC assignment and utilization. Members responding to a call for service related to a man with a gun is clearly a law enforcement encounter or activity.

⁴ The Consent Decree also reinforces expectations that the Department's BWC roll-out complies with the Act to increase accountability and improve trust. It requires all officers assigned to patrol field duties wear BWC to record law-enforcement related activities, with limited exceptions. See ¶236 & ¶237.