

SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date of Incident:	March 2020 through April 9, 2020
Time of Incident:	Various
Location of Incident:	██
Date of COPA Notification:	April 10, 2020
Time of COPA Notification:	4:33pm

On April 9, 2020, ██████████ (hereafter ██████████) arrived at the Rosemont fire station and alleged that her ██████████ Officer Joseph Vecchio (hereafter Officer Vecchio), caused damage to her cell phone and vacuum cleaner following a verbal altercation at his apartment. While at the fire station, ██████████ reported Officer Vecchio calling her multiple times and threatening her. She also reported other incidents involving Officer Vecchio, stating he has previously thrown eggs at her vehicle and put his hand on her neck. COPA finds the allegations against Officer Vecchio to be Sustained in part.

II. INVOLVED PARTIES

Involved Officer #1:	Joseph Vecchio, Star #14469, Employee ID# ██████████, Date of Appointment: October 16, 2019, Police Officer, Unit of Assignment: 006, DOB: ██████████, 1995, male, white
Involved Individual #1:	██████████ DOB: ██████████, 1991, female, white
Involved Individual #2:	██████████ male

III. ALLEGATIONS

Officer	Allegation	Finding
Officer Joseph Vecchio	1. On or about April 6, 2020, at an unknown time at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio threw eggs at ██████████ vehicle.	Sustained
	2. On or about April 9, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio threw and/or kicked ██████████ cell phone.	Sustained

<p>3. On or about April 9, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio stepped on ██████████ vacuum cleaner.</p>	<p>Sustained</p>
<p>4. On or about April 9, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio harassed ██████████ by calling her phone repeatedly.</p>	<p>Not Sustained</p>
<p>5. On or about April 9, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio threatened ██████████ by stating words to the effect of “You better watch your back.”</p>	<p>Sustained</p>
<p>6. On or about April 9, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio stated words to the effect of “I’m about to do something really stupid right now and it’s going to be all your fault if I do this,” to ██████████</p>	<p>Sustained</p>
<p>7. On an unknown date and time in approximately March 2020, at or near ██████████ ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio placed his hand around ██████████ ██████████ neck without justification.</p>	<p>Not Sustained</p>

IV. APPLICABLE RULES AND LAWS

Rules

1. Rule 2: Any action or conduct which impedes the Department’s efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department.
2. Rule 8: Disrespect to or maltreatment of any person, while on or off duty.
3. Rule 9: Engaging in any unjustified verbal or physical altercation with any person, while on or off duty.

INVESTIGATION¹

a. Interviews

COPA interviewed ██████████ (hereafter ██████████² on April 14, 2020, over the phone due to the COVID-19 pandemic.³ ██████████ related that she met Officer Vecchio at a gym in May of 2019, and they began dating in July of 2019. ██████████ related Officer Vecchio was not abusive in the beginning of their relationship; however, he was controlling. She stated that her parents did not like him, and they observed the “red flags”⁴ that she ignored. Additionally, he tried to isolate her from her friends and tried to make it seem like her friends were bad people.

Officer Vecchio convinced ██████████ that her parents were able to listen to her phone calls and read her text messages because she was included on their phone plan. On April 9, 2020, ██████████ agreed to get a new phone and obtain her own phone plan. After she got the new phone, they went to Officer Vecchio’s apartment to activate the phone. ██████████ parents were not speaking to her at the time, and they were communicating through her family friend ██████████ (hereafter ██████████ to relate things to her. ██████████ related that ██████████ “cannot stand” Officer Vecchio.⁵ ██████████ called ██████████ and informed her that her mom wanted the old phone back so she could turn it in and wanted ██████████ to pay the remaining balance on the phone. While ██████████ was on the phone with ██████████ Officer Vecchio told her to hang up the phone. ██████████ then told ██████████ to put Officer Vecchio on the phone, and an argument ensued, resulting in ██████████ hanging up the phone. ██████████ got upset, stating that her parents were not speaking to her because of him, and now her friend was mad at her because of him.

██████████ stated that they were both sitting on the couch in the living room, and she got up to leave. At that time, Officer Vecchio “stomped” on ██████████ vacuum. ██████████ got upset and told him that she spent \$400 on the vacuum.⁶ She related that he then stomped on it again, and it bent. ██████████ was crying, and Officer Vecchio then grabbed her old phone from the kitchen table, threw it on the ground, and kicked it under the refrigerator. She related that the camera on the phone cracked due to his actions. He then told her to get out of his apartment, and she grabbed her phone from under the refrigerator. She went to grab her vacuum, but he would not let her take it.⁷

██████████ then went to her friend ██████████ house and told her about the situation. She related that ██████████ was the Chief of Police in Rosemont at the time, and he told her to go to the station and talk to him. At that time, Officer Vecchio was calling ██████████ repeatedly,

¹ COPA conducted a thorough and complete investigation. The following is a summary of the material evidence gathered and relied upon in our analysis.

² Att. 4-5

³ Att. 7, COPA attempted to obtain a signed affidavit from ██████████ but was unsuccessful. Therefore, an Affidavit Override was obtained.

⁴ Att. 5, page 11.

⁵ COPA contacted ██████████ who stated she did not wish to provide a statement to COPA or cooperate with the investigation.

⁶ Att. 5, page 28, ██████████ related that her vacuum was a Dyson wireless vacuum. It was laying on the floor next to the couch charging when Officer Vecchio “stomped” on it.

⁷ Att. 5, page 20, ██████████ related that she assumed Officer Vecchio did not want her to take the vacuum because he did not want her to use it as evidence.

so she blocked his phone number, and she blocked him on Instagram and Snapchat. He then began calling her from a private phone number. ██████ arrived at the fire station and spoke to the Rosemont Superintendent of Public Safety at the time, Donald Stephens III (hereafter Stephens). Stephens instructed ██████ to answer Officer Vecchio's phone calls and put the phone on speaker so he could listen. Officer Vecchio's mood shifted on the phone calls, from being angry to apologetic, and asking to meet with her to give her a hair straightener and vacuum back to her. ██████ refused to meet with him, and he told her, "You're going to make me do something really stupid."⁸ He then hung up on her, and when he called back, he stated, "And it's going to be all your fault."⁹ She began crying because even though he was mean to her, she still cared about him. She further related that at one point when the phone was on speaker, he stated, "You better watch your back,"¹⁰ and then hung up.

Officer Vecchio believed that ██████ was calling him on a conference call, so he requested that she call him back via Snapchat audio. She unblocked him on Snapchat and called him as he requested. He was able to see her current location on Snapchat, and she told him she was at the firehouse because her cousin was working there and she needed to clear her mind.¹¹ ██████ informed Officer Vecchio that if he wanted to meet with her, he could come to the firehouse, and he eventually agreed. He arrived at the firehouse and spoke to ██████ in his vehicle. He was crying and told her he was not going to be alright unless he was with her. ██████ related that she felt he was manipulating her. She asked if he brought her hair straightener as he said he would, and he related he left it at his apartment. He had brought part of the vacuum with him but left the broken part back in his apartment as well. ██████ then asked Officer Vecchio to leave and give her space. She informed him she would call him when she left the firehouse. When she got back in the firehouse, he called her again and asked to see her tonight. Again, she informed him she would call him when she left.

A friend of ██████ was driving past ██████ apartment and observed Officer Vecchio in his vehicle in the parking lot.¹² Her friend told ██████ mother, who then sent a text message to Stephens. Stephens then conducted a traffic stop of Officer Vecchio's vehicle. Stephens informed Officer Vecchio to retrieve all ██████ property and bring it to the police station. Stephens further informed him to not contact ██████ for any reason. As of the date of the interview, she had not heard from him since he was pulled over.

██████ related that approximately a month before the incident, she and Officer Vecchio engaged in a physical altercation. She could not recall how the argument started. He threw her purse, and she then "shoved"¹³ him. Officer Vecchio then held ██████ up against the refrigerator

⁸ Att. 5, page 22.

⁹ Att. 5, page 22.

¹⁰ Att. 5, page 52.

¹¹ Att. 11, COPA followed up with ██████ at a later date to clarify who was at the Rosemont firehouse with her at the time when Officer Vecchio was calling her repeatedly. ██████ related that only herself and ██████ were present for the phone calls. She further related that she told Officer Vecchio her cousin was working and was there with her as well, but that was not actually the case.

¹² Att. 5, page 56, ██████ related in her statement that she would attempt to retrieve the video footage from cameras at her apartment complex. Att. 11, COPA followed up with ██████ regarding the video footage, and ██████ related that there were no cameras at her apartment complex, so she was unable to obtain any footage.

¹³ Att. 5, page 37.

with his hand around her throat. She stated he applied pressure with his hand to her throat, but it was not restricting her breathing. She stated she was going to call the police, and he released his hand. She then ran out of his apartment and did not call the police. She did not have any bruising or marks from the incident.

██████████ further related that a few days before the incident on April 9, 2020, she and Officer Vecchio got into another argument at his apartment. He told her to leave the apartment, and she did. As she was leaving, he threw multiple eggs out his apartment window at her vehicle. When he stopped throwing the eggs, she got in her vehicle and drove off. Officer Vecchio repeatedly called her on her phone, and she ignored the calls. Eventually, she answered, and he asked if she wanted him to help clean her car, to which she said yes. She drove back to his apartment and he cleaned the eggs off her car. Officer Vecchio then wanted her to stay at his apartment, so she went inside. Another argument ensued, and ██████████ went outside to leave again. As she was pulling her car away, Officer Vecchio threw another egg at her car. ██████████ related that Officer Vecchio has thrown eggs at her car a total of three times. After the first time, she called her personal trainer ██████████ (hereafter ██████████). She related that she was close with ██████████ and shared things with her often.¹⁴ ██████████ informed ██████████ to take a photo of the eggs on her car. She related she did not take a photo the first time he threw eggs at her car because she was ██████████. However, she did take a photo after he threw eggs at her car on April 6, 2020.

COPA interviewed **Officer Joseph Vecchio** on July 13, 2022.¹⁵ Officer Vecchio related that he was in an “on and off” relationship with ██████████ for approximately a year or two, starting in 2018 or 2019. He related that on April 9, 2020, he and ██████████ were cleaning his apartment. They got into a disagreement that resulted in them breaking up. He could not recall what the disagreement was about. ██████████ had brought over her Dyson vacuum cleaner because Officer Vecchio did not have his own vacuum cleaner at the time. He related the vacuum cleaner was located by the wall, laying down on the floor, and he accidentally stepped on it. The verbal argument continued, and ██████████ left his apartment shortly after. He denied throwing or kicking her cell phone and stated he could not recall if she had gotten a new phone that day.

Officer Vecchio related that at some point after ██████████ left they communicated over the phone. He stated that they sent messages back and forth on Snapchat, as well as calling and speaking on the phone.¹⁶ He stated the calls were relating to what occurred between them that night and their relationship, but he could not recall the details of the messages or phone calls. He also could not recall how many times they communicated via telephone that night. When asked if he stated anything to the effect of “You better watch your back” to her, he responded that he did not recall. He also stated he did not recall stating anything to the effect of “I’m about to do something really stupid right now and it is going to be all your fault if I do this” to ██████████. Officer Vecchio also did not recall if he called her from a private phone number or a blocked phone number on the night of the incident.

¹⁴ COPA contacted ██████████ during the investigation. ██████████ related she did not want to be involved in the investigation because Officer Vecchio was one of her former employees.

¹⁵ Att. 15-17

¹⁶ Att. 17, pages 15-16, Officer Vecchio related he could not recall if they spoke over the phone through regular phone calls or through Snapchat audio calls.

Officer Vecchio further related that [REDACTED] informed him over the phone that she was located at the Rosemont firehouse. She asked him to come to the firehouse to speak to her, which he did. They had a conversation in his vehicle located in the parking lot of the firehouse, and he could not recall any details of the conversation. He then went back to his apartment for an unknown amount of time. At some point, [REDACTED] requested that he drop her vacuum cleaner off at her apartment. He related he went to her apartment to do so, but she was not there. He waited in his vehicle in the parking lot of her apartment complex. Eventually, he left because [REDACTED] did not arrive at her apartment to get the vacuum.

As Officer Vecchio was driving towards his apartment, he was pulled over by Rosemont police officers. He knew two of the police officers on the scene, one being [REDACTED] and the other being [REDACTED]. They informed Officer Vecchio that they pulled him over for speeding, although he denied that he was speeding. They discussed with him the incident he had with [REDACTED] but he could not recall the specific details they spoke about. Additionally, the officers read something to him that was similar to an order of protection, but not in an official capacity, instructing him not to speak to [REDACTED]. His vehicle was searched during the traffic stop, and the officers took [REDACTED] vacuum cleaner out of his vehicle. The officers instructed Officer Vecchio to return to his apartment to retrieve the rest of [REDACTED] belongings, which he believed were a hairbrush and a curling iron and drop them off at the Rosemont police station. He dropped off the hairbrush but was unable to find the curling iron. Officer Vecchio further related that he called his supervisor in the police academy the same night of the incident to briefly explain the situation. His supervisor told him to go to the 016 district the next morning to document the incident. He did so and created a To-From report to document his perspective of the incident.

When asked if he threw eggs at [REDACTED] vehicle, Officer Vecchio responded that he did not recall ever doing that. He also stated [REDACTED] never asked him to help her clean eggs off her vehicle. When asked about the physical incident from March of 2020, Officer Vecchio related that he did not recall any such incident. He denied ever placing his hand on [REDACTED] neck and pushing her up against the refrigerator.¹⁷

During the course of the investigation, COPA contacted **Donald Stephens**.¹⁸ Stephens related that he is family friends with [REDACTED] parents and does not know [REDACTED] very well. He vaguely remembered what occurred on the date of incident, April 9, 2020. He recalled that [REDACTED] father called him to speak to [REDACTED] about relationships that day. He also recalled [REDACTED] coming to the fire station to speak with him, where he had an office. He did not recall Officer Vecchio calling [REDACTED] while they were at the fire station. He also did not recall [REDACTED] mentioning anything about Officer Vecchio making any kind of threats to her. Stephens related that it is possible that occurred, but he did not remember it specifically. He further related that it was difficult to get [REDACTED] to share information about the situation. Stephens recalled conducting a traffic stop of Officer Vecchio's vehicle, but he did not recall many details about it.

¹⁷ Officer Vecchio revealed that [REDACTED] was pregnant with their [REDACTED], whose due date was the day of his COPA interview. However, he could not recall when they began speaking again or when their relationship became sexual. He claimed that their relationship status at the time of the interview was merely that she was the [REDACTED] of his [REDACTED] and they were not romantically involved.

¹⁸ Att. 13

He further related that [REDACTED] father, [REDACTED] knows more information about what happened during the incident.¹⁹

b. Digital Evidence

COPA received three **Photos** from [REDACTED]²⁰ One photo appears to be of a dark gray Lexus vehicle.²¹ The photo is taken of the driver's side of the vehicle, and there appears to be yellow residue on both the driver's side front and rear windows and doors. The residue is consistent with eggs being thrown at the vehicle. An additional photo is of the back side of a red iPhone. The camera on the iPhone appears to be cracked. The last photo provided by [REDACTED] is of her Dyson V7 Motorhead vacuum cleaner. The aluminum hose of the vacuum appears to be bent in two separate places.

COPA received **Surveillance Video Footage**²² from the exterior of the Rosemont Village fire station located at 5800 N. River Road. The video footage from the exterior of the fire station shows a dark grey Lexus pull into the parking lot and a female walk into the building. COPA also received **Dashcam Video Footage**²³ of the traffic stop involving Officer Vecchio. The dashcam video of the traffic stop depicts multiple officers respond to the scene of the traffic stop.²⁴ At the end of the video, an officer gets back into the vehicle and appears to be speaking to someone on the phone. The officer relates basic facts about the situation and why the traffic stop was conducted, which is consistent with the facts in the police report.²⁵

c. Documentary Evidence

A **Rosemont Public Safety Police report (Incident #202000012916)** documents the incident in detail.²⁶ The information in the report is consistent with [REDACTED] statement and includes additional details. The report documents that when [REDACTED] arrived at the Rosemont firehouse, Officer Vecchio called her cell phone over 40 consecutive times. The officers at the firehouse advised her to answer the phone, and Officer Vecchio was heard trying to convince [REDACTED] to meet him somewhere to talk.²⁷ Officer Vecchio's demeanor and emotions were changing from one extreme to the other, as he went from threatening [REDACTED] by telling her, "You better watch your back!" to crying stating, "I'm about to do something really stupid right now and

¹⁹ COPA attempted to contact [REDACTED] multiple times but was unsuccessful.

²⁰ Att. 8-10

²¹ Att. 5, page 59 [REDACTED] related her car was a dark gray Lexus NX Sport.

²² Att. 21-27

²³ Att. 19-20

²⁴ COPA did not receive the dashcam video footage of the patrol vehicle that initiated the traffic stop. COPA received dashcam video footage from two vehicles that appeared to arrive at the scene after the traffic stop had begun, and they pulled behind the vehicle that initiated the traffic stop. For this reason, COPA was unable to see the interactions of the officers and Officer Vecchio during the traffic stop. The traffic stop appears to start before 11:25 p.m. and conclude at approximately 12:08 a.m. the following morning.

²⁵ Att. 20 at 41:00

²⁶ Att. 1

²⁷ Att. 18, Pursuant to 50 ILCS 706/10-20(b), the Village of Rosemont withheld from disclosing a DVD containing one officer-worn camera video footage of the traffic stop and two officer-worn camera video footage depicting the conversation at the Village fire station that is referenced in the incident report.

its going to be all your fault if I do this!”²⁸ He would hang up the phone after each statement and then quickly call back, continuing to harass ██████████. He continued to attempt to get ██████████ to meet him somewhere, stating he was “really upset and could not be alone right now.”²⁹ He then told her she left her straightening iron at his apartment, and he wanted to bring it back to her. He told ██████████ that he did not want to speak through the normal phone because he felt she had other people on the line listening, so he called her through the Snapchat app. By doing this, he was able to see her location, and he told her he knew she was at the firehouse. ██████████ informed Officer Vecchio he could meet her at the firehouse if he really wanted to talk to her. He did so, and he did not have the straightening iron to give to her. They spoke in his vehicle together, and he made statements that he did not feel well. He related he felt like he was going to vomit, so she told him to go home, try to rest and eat something. ██████████ explained she wanted space and for him to leave.

Minutes after Officer Vecchio left the firehouse, ██████████ was informed by her neighbor that Officer Vecchio was sitting in his vehicle in the parking lot of her apartment building, and it seemed as though he was waiting for her. After he noticed he was spotted, he drove off at a high rate of speed. A traffic stop was conducted on Officer Vecchio for speeding, and he was questioned about the statements he made during the phone conversations at the firehouse. The report related that it was imperative to check on the mental health of Officer Vecchio, due to his comments to ██████████ insinuating he was going to hurt himself. He denied ever saying the comments, as well as having feelings of hurting himself or anyone else. He was asked about what transpired over the course of the evening and why he was sitting outside ██████████ apartment. Officer Vecchio “could not provide any consistent answers to the questions being asked of him.”³⁰ He stated ██████████ asked him to meet her at her apartment so he could return the straightening iron to her, but he left after she did not come outside. The report relates that when Officer Vecchio was informed that it was known ██████████ never told him to go to her apartment, due to officers being present at the time of the phone conversation, he “had nothing to say.”³¹ He admitted to breaking ██████████ vacuum cleaner, and stated it was still at his apartment along with her straightening iron. He was instructed to return home, collect ██████████ belongings, and bring them to the police station. He arrived at the police station with the broken vacuum and a hairbrush and stated he could not find the straightening iron. He was advised to not contact ██████████

██████████ shared with the Rosemont Public Safety officers that during a previous argument, Officer Vecchio grabbed her by the neck and held her up to the refrigerator while choking her. She further shared that on April 6, 2020, Officer Vecchio started throwing eggs at her vehicle, after she was attempting to escape another abusive situation. Two photos of the bent vacuum cleaner were attached to the police report.³²

²⁸ Att. 1, page 5.

²⁹ Att.1, page 5.

³⁰ Att. 1, page 6.

³¹ Att. 1, page 6.

³² Att. 1, pages 8-9, the photos included in the report are not the same photos that ██████████ provided to COPA. However, they appear to be of the same bent vacuum cleaner from a different angle.

An **Initiation Report** was generated to document that Officer Vecchio, who was a probationary officer at the time of the incident, was involved in a domestic disturbance that was reported in Rosemont.³³

Multiple **To-From Reports** were also created regarding the notification of the incident.³⁴ Officer Vecchio created a to-from report at the direction of his supervisor at the police academy at the time. The information included in his report is essentially the same information he related in his statement to COPA. The report added that while in the parking lot of [REDACTED] apartment, Officer Vecchio noticed a Jeep circling the area and stopping near Officer Vecchio's vehicle. He recognized the Jeep and the driver as one of [REDACTED] friends, [REDACTED].³⁵

d. Additional Evidence

COPA obtained [REDACTED] **Phone Records** from Verizon for April 9, 2020.³⁶ The records reflect that there are eight phone calls between [REDACTED] and Officer Vecchio between 7:01 p.m. and 11:21 p.m.³⁷ The first phone call is outgoing to Officer Vecchio, and the others are all incoming calls to [REDACTED]. There are also five incoming calls from an "unavailable" number between 7:07 p.m. and 7:53 p.m. Most of the phone calls with Officer Vecchio and the "unavailable" number appear to be answered, with elapsed time ranges between one minute and thirty-five minutes.

V. LEGAL STANDARD

For each Allegation COPA must make one of the following findings:

1. Sustained - where it is determined the allegation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence;
2. Not Sustained - where it is determined there is insufficient evidence to prove the allegations by a preponderance of the evidence;
3. Unfounded - where it is determined by clear and convincing evidence that an allegation is false or not factual; or
4. Exonerated - where it is determined by clear and convincing evidence that the conduct described in the allegation occurred, but it is lawful and proper.

A **preponderance of evidence** can be described as evidence indicating that it is **more likely than not** that the conduct reviewed complied with Department policy. *See Avery v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.*, 216 Ill. 2d 100, 191 (2005), (a proposition is proved by a preponderance of the evidence when it has found to be more probably true than not). If the evidence gathered in

³³ Att. 1, page 1

³⁴ Att. 2

³⁵ COPA attempted to contact [REDACTED] but was unsuccessful.

³⁶ Att. 14

³⁷ The phone number on the Verizon records is the same number listed in Officer Vecchio's personal information on the Rosemont Public Safety Police report.

an investigation establishes that it is more likely that the conduct complied with Department policy than that it did not, even if by a narrow margin, then the preponderance of the evidence standard is met.

Clear and convincing evidence is a higher standard than a preponderance of the evidence but lower than the "beyond-a-reasonable doubt" standard required to convict a person of a criminal offense. See *e.g.*, *People v. Coan*, 2016 IL App (2d) 151036 (2016). Clear and Convincing can be defined as a "degree of proof, which, considering all the evidence in the case, produces the firm and abiding belief that it is highly probable that the proposition . . . is true." *Id.* at ¶ 28.

VI. ANALYSIS

COPA finds **Allegation 1** that on or about April 6, 2020, at an unknown time at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio threw eggs at ██████████ vehicle is **Sustained**. Not only did ██████████ share that Officer Vecchio threw eggs at her vehicle in her statement to COPA, but she also mentioned it to Rosemont Public Safety Police, and it was included in their incident report. When asked at the end of his statement if he threw eggs at ██████████ vehicle, Officer Vecchio responded that he did not recall ever doing that, rather than denying it. ██████████ provided a photo of what appears to be eggs thrown onto her dark gray Lexus. Therefore, COPA finds the allegation is Sustained based on a preponderance of the evidence.

COPA finds **Allegation 2** that on or about April 9, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio threw and/or kicked ██████████ cell phone is **Sustained**. ██████████ related that Officer Vecchio grabbed her old phone from the kitchen table, threw it on the ground, and kicked it under the refrigerator. She related that the camera on the phone cracked due to his actions and provided COPA with a photo as evidence. Although Officer Vecchio denied throwing or kicking her cell phone, COPA finds the allegation is Sustained based on a preponderance of the evidence.

COPA finds **Allegation 3** that on or about April 9, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio stepped on ██████████ vacuum cleaner is **Sustained**. ██████████ related in her statement that as she got up to leave, Officer Vecchio "stomped" on her vacuum cleaner twice. COPA received three total photos of the vacuum cleaner, two that were attached to the police report, and one provided by ██████████ The aluminum hose of the vacuum appears to be bent in two places, consistent with being stepped on two times. Officer Vecchio admitted in his statement that he stepped on the vacuum, but he related that it was accidental. However, based on the totality of the evidence, COPA does not find this claim credible. Therefore, the allegation is Sustained based on a preponderance of the evidence.

COPA finds **Allegation 4** that on or about April 9, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near ██████████ Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio harassed ██████████ by calling her phone repeatedly is **Not Sustained**. The police report states that while explaining the situation to officers at the firehouse, Officer Vecchio called ██████████ cell phone over 40 consecutive times. The cell phone records reflect that there are eight phone calls between ██████████ and Officer Vecchio between 7:01 p.m. and 11:21 p.m. The first phone call is outgoing to Officer Vecchio, and the others are all incoming calls to ██████████ There are also five incoming calls from an

“unavailable” number between 7:07 p.m. and 7:53 p.m. Most of the phone calls with Officer Vecchio and the “unavailable” number appear to be answered. COPA does not find the multiple calls to [REDACTED] harassing in nature because the records reflect that she was not ignoring his calls and was rather engaging with him by answer the calls and speaking to him. Although the “unavailable” phone number could have been Officer Vecchio calling from a blocked number, [REDACTED] answered those calls as well. It is unknown how many calls took place through Snapchat. For the reasons stated above, COPA cannot prove or disprove the repeated calls were harassing in nature. Therefore, the allegation is Not Sustained based on a preponderance of the evidence.

COPA finds **Allegations 5 and 6** that on or about April 9, 2020, at approximately 6:00 p.m. at or near [REDACTED] Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio threatened [REDACTED] by stating words to the effect of “You better watch your back” and words to the effect of “I’m about to do something really stupid right now and its going to be all your fault if I do this,” to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] are **Sustained**. The police report documents that Officer Vecchio’s demeanor and emotions were changing from one extreme to the other. He went from threatening [REDACTED] by telling her, “You better watch your back!” to crying stating, “I’m about to do something really stupid right now and it’s going to be all your fault if I do this!” [REDACTED] confirmed that he said those things in her interview. Officer Vecchio related in his statement that he did not recall saying those things, rather than denying it. Therefore, COPA finds the allegations are Sustained based on a preponderance of the evidence.

COPA finds **Allegation 7** that on an unknown date and time in approximately March 2020, at or near [REDACTED] Chicago, IL, Officer Joseph Vecchio placed his hand around [REDACTED] [REDACTED] neck without justification is **Not Sustained**. [REDACTED] did not report the alleged incident when it occurred. Officer Vecchio could not recall the argument and denied ever placing his hand on [REDACTED] neck. As there are no photos or other evidence to corroborate or discredit the content of the allegation, the allegation is not sufficiently supported. For the reasons stated above, COPA finds that this allegation cannot be proven by a preponderance of evidence and is Not Sustained.

VII. RECOMMENDED DISCIPLINE FOR SUSTAINED ALLEGATIONS

a. Officer Joseph Vecchio

i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History

Officer Vecchio has received a total of 52 awards and recognitions. He has received 3 reprimands. One reprimand was for an incident in 2021 for a preventable accident. The second reprimand was for an incident in 2021 for a preventable accident. The last reprimand was for an incident in 2022 for noncompliance with the vehicle pursuit requirements.

ii. Recommended Penalty, by Allegation

COPA has considered Officer Vecchio’s complimentary and disciplinary histories. COPA has also considered his lack of being forthcoming during his interview and lack of personal accountability. Officer Vecchio committed misconduct by damaging [REDACTED] property on more than one occasion. He was also verbally abusive to her. His conduct was a violation of Department

Rules 2, 8 and 9. Considering all of these factors, COPA recommends a 30-day suspension and Anger Management.

Approved:



Sharday Jackson
Deputy Chief Administrator

May 12, 2023

Date