



Brandon Johnson
Mayor

Department of Police • City of Chicago
3510 S. Michigan Avenue • Chicago, Illinois 60653

Larry B. Snelling
Superintendent

September 20, 2024

Andrea Kersten
Chief Administrator
Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA)
1615 West Chicago Avenue, 4th Floor
Chicago, Illinois 60622

Re: Superintendent's Non-Concurrence with Finding and with Penalty Recommendation
Complaint Log No. 2021-0001096

Dear Chief Administrator Kersten:

After a careful review of the above referenced complaint log number investigation, the Chicago Police Department (Department) does not concur with the recommended sustained finding nor with the penalty recommendation as they pertain to Officer Charles White, Star No. 6422. Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Department provides the following comments.

The COPA investigation recommended a penalty of a suspension of 45 to 60-days for Officer White after concluding that he:

1. Struck [REDACTED] in the face with his hand without justification.

The Department does not concur with this sustained finding and recommends a finding of Not Sustained as the burden of proof has not been met. In his interview, Officer White denied the allegation and stated that there was a physical altercation where [REDACTED] was the main aggressor. In the Summary Report, COPA states that "COPA was unable to corroborate this or any other details of this incident with [REDACTED] who declined to provide a formal interview. [REDACTED] interview is necessary to do a complete credibility assessment, but [REDACTED] did remain consistent with her accounts on BWC, even though her entire narrative was not obtained. Also, her story was corroborated by her physical injuries which were seen on BWC." SRI at page 4.

COPA also acknowledges that [REDACTED] provided "differing accounts" of when she alleges that Officer White took her watch from her and therefore that allegation was not sustained. Despite these admittedly inconsistent statements from [REDACTED] that should reflect on her credibility, COPA determined that her allegation of being struck was credible based on BWC video footage and because [REDACTED] sustained injuries. COPA completely discounts the visible injuries that Officer White sustained and that corroborate his version of events. These injuries are acknowledged by COPA in its summary report as being visible on BWC video footage and are clearly visible in Officer White's mugshot photo and are documented by the arresting officers. [REDACTED] injuries are not visible in any video footage. COPA bases its conclusion that [REDACTED] had a swollen left eye and bruising around the

left eye on 1) the fact that an ambulance was called and paramedics gave Ms. [REDACTED] an ice pack, 2) Ms. [REDACTED] verbally complaining about her injuries to the responding officers, 3) the women in the SUV reporting seeing it and 4) the responding officers reporting that [REDACTED] had a swollen face and that the swelling was consistent with being struck and not crying. However, even taken together, these four bases do not substantiate the allegation.

COPA then states that the Allegation is Sustained because [REDACTED] said numerous times on the scene that Officer White struck her. But the fact of repeating a statement does not make the statement automatically true. COPA also said that the two callers to 911 had stated that they saw a man hitting woman. However, this information is not clear as the conversation is with the call taker gathering information to provide basic information to responding officers. This call does not carry the weight of an interview for the caller to describe exactly what was seen and in what sequence it was seen. COPA has made no attempt to contact or interview the 911 callers.

Further, COPA does not interview either of the responding Sergeants on the scene nor the Lieutenant who directs the Sergeants to bring all parties into the police station. The Lieutenant speaks to both Officer White and [REDACTED]. Yet the Lieutenant and both Sergeants are not interviewed nor is the BWC for Sgt. Haltek made part of the casefile as Sgt. Haltek was the primary investigating supervisor who ultimately initiated this log number.

Finally, this incident occurred on 27 March 2021. It is unknown when [REDACTED] declined to cooperate with the investigation as COPA does not indicate what attempts were made and when they were made and when/how [REDACTED] responded. Officer White was interviewed on 23 January 2024 and this investigation was concluded on 27 June 2024. No explanation or documentation is provided to justify or explain the reason for this long delay.

Based on the limited evidence available in this investigation, there is insufficient evidence and information to sustain the Allegation. It is inappropriate and unreasonable to propose a sustained finding and significant penalty based on an incomplete investigation, especially in consideration of the fact that P.O. White also sustained injuries.

The Department also believes that another investigation conducted by COPA that resulted in Not Sustained findings should be compared to the instant case.

Log #2021-0004747

On November 28, 2021, at approximately 10:00 p.m., Sgt. Armando Rosas responded to a domestic disturbance. Officer LaShawn Taylor attempted to remove her partner from Officer Taylor's apartment while off duty. Officer Taylor's partner was visiting from out of town. It was alleged by the partner that Officer Taylor engaged in an unjustified physical altercation with her. In the Case Report, it is documented that Officer Taylor returned from a night of drinking with friends to find her partner asleep on the couch in her apartment. She woke up her partner. There was an argument between Officer Taylor and her partner and Officer Taylor told her partner to leave the apartment. However, the partner refused, as she was visiting Officer Taylor from Georgia and had nowhere to stay. Officer Taylor threw items around the apartment and struck her partner with a shoe. Her partner pushed Officer Taylor to stop her from throwing things around the apartment. As the argument continued, a second open-handed push was delivered by her partner to Officer Taylor. Officer Taylor and her

partner were knocked to the ground after a struggle. With Officer Taylor's legs around her partner's body, Officer Taylor pinned her to the floor in a sumo hold/choke hold. Both Officer Taylor and her partner called CPD after they separated from each other. Her partner had a "minor scratch" on her forearm and did not want to press charges. The residence was not in disarray, so the aggressor could not be identified. Officer Taylor and her partner declined medical treatment. As Officer Taylor was not forthcoming with information regarding the altercation, she was transported to the 018 District Station, where she took a Breathalyzer test and was then transferred to [REDACTED] Hospital. In response to detectives' inquiries, her partner declined to press charges, saying that her luggage had been thrown and there had been minor physical contact between the two. Due to the refusal of the complainant to prosecute, the criminal case was classified as non-prosecution. The partner refused to cooperate with COPA's investigation. Both allegations that Officer Taylor engaged in an unjustified physical altercation and restrained her partner with her legs were not sustained by COPA. According to COPA, Officer Taylor denied the allegations and "there are no independent witnesses". COPA concluded that "the totality of the circumstances indicates that it is not possible for COPA to determine if these allegations did or did not occur as alleged. Therefore, these allegations should be Not Sustained."

This investigation gathered similar evidence to Log #2012-004747. Officer White denied initiating physical contact with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] refused to cooperate with COPA. Officer White denied all allegations in his statement to COPA. As such, this allegation against Officer White should be not sustained. The Department looks forward to discussing this matter with you pursuant to MCC 2-78-130(a)(iii).

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Larry B. Snelling
Superintendent
Chicago Police Department