

**BEFORE A MEMBER OF THE POLICE BOARD
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO**

IN THE MATTER OF THE	)	
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISCIPLINE OF	)	
POLICE OFFICER GEMERA BROWN, STAR No. 13372,	)	Case No. 26 RR 46
POLICE OFFICER NIYELL POWELL, STAR No. 13594, AND	)	Case No. 26 RR 47
POLICE OFFICER DONOVAN FOSTER, STAR No. 9515,	)	Case No. 26 RR 48
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE,	)	
CITY OF CHICAGO.	)	(CR No. 2023-1294)

REQUEST FOR REVIEW

On July 13, 2026, the Executive Director of the Police Board of the City of Chicago received from the Chief Administrator of the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) a request for review of the Chief Administrator's recommendations for discipline of Police Officers Gemera Brown, Star No. 13372, Niyell Powell, Star No. 13594, and Donovan Foster, Star No. 9515, arising out of the investigation of Complaint Register No. 2023-1294 ("Request for Review"). The Request for Review included the following material: the Final Summary Report of COPA's investigation that sets forth the Chief Administrator's recommendations for discipline, the Superintendent of Police's written response to these recommendations, the Chief Administrator's written objections to the Superintendent's response, and a Certificate of Meeting and Service.

The investigation stems from incidents that took place on April 4 and April 7, 2021, at [REDACTED] in Chicago. According to the Final Summary Report of the investigation, at 2:23 pm on April 4, 2021, [REDACTED] called 911 to report that her landlord, Michael Blanchard, and others had entered her apartment

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unannounced, and while she was in a state of undress. [REDACTED] alleged that during the ensuing altercation, Blanchard battered her using a wooden board and a chair and then sprayed her in the face with a chemical irritant. The Chicago Fire Department arrived on scene at 2:40 pm and treated [REDACTED] for pain in her hand. Officers Powell and Foster arrived at approximately 3:05 pm. [REDACTED] met them at the front door and, after a short conversation, led them to her apartment. Officer Foster broke away from the group momentarily and traveled back down the stairs to look for Blanchard. He appeared to look over the railing toward the first floor. Soon after, Officer Powell remarked that he could smell the chemical irritant and the officers and [REDACTED] returned outside. As Officer Powell completed a Victim Information Notice (VIN), [REDACTED] stated she wanted Blanchard arrested. In response, Officer Powell gave [REDACTED] the VIN with instructions on how to obtain an arrest warrant for Blanchard so the police could take him into custody.

On April 5, 2021, Blanchard went to the third district police station to report the altercation he had with [REDACTED] the day before. Blanchard alleged that he and his contractor, [REDACTED] were at the apartment complex performing renovations when [REDACTED] assaulted him with a series of closed-fist punches. Blanchard did not report any injuries, and he was issued a VIN.

On April 7, 2021, at 9:24 am, Blanchard called 911 to report that [REDACTED] was back on the premises and refused to leave. The event query related to the call documented that [REDACTED] was wanted for an assault which was reported under RD# JE189942. Officer

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Brown, who was working as a field training officer (FTO) and Probationary Police Officer Jermaine Townsend were dispatched to the call and arrived on the scene at 9:39 am. The officers had a short conversation with Blanchard, who agreed to sign a complaint. Blanchard then led the group into the apartment building and up to [REDACTED] alleged apartment. Blanchard directed the officers to the main door that led to [REDACTED] apartment, which did not appear to have a lock, and told the officers it was open. FTO Brown called out “Chicago Police” as she kicked open the door, which made a sound as though something metal was leaning against it, likely to keep it closed. FTO Brown announced her office again and kicked the door several times until she heard [REDACTED] call out, “What, who is it?” FTO Brown announced her office again, walked through the doorway into a small common area, and asked [REDACTED] to come out. [REDACTED] stuck her head out into the hallway, said that she was not dressed yet, and asked, “Are you helping me?” FTO Brown told [REDACTED] she needed her to “come over here,” asked who else was there, and then walked through a threshold where the main door to the apartment had been removed. [REDACTED] responded, “Nobody.” FTO Brown again told [REDACTED] to step out, and [REDACTED] then stepped into the hall unclothed from the waist down. FTO Brown ordered [REDACTED] to get dressed and handed her a pair of pants. Once [REDACTED] was dressed, FTO Brown handcuffed her and told her she was being arrested for assault.

Following the conclusion of COPA’s investigation, the Chief Administrator recommended that the allegations set forth below be *Sustained*.

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Police Officer Gemera Brown:

1. Entered the apartment occupied by [REDACTED] without justification; and
2. Entered the residence of [REDACTED] without a warrant.

Police Officers Niyell Powell and Donovan Foster:

1. Failed to conduct a thorough investigation of the alleged battery call between the tenant and landlord.

The Chief Administrator recommended that Officer Brown be suspended for between five and fifteen days, and that Officers Powell and Foster each be suspended for between one and three days.

The Superintendent disagreed with the Chief Administrator's recommendations in that he: (1) proposed findings of *Unfounded* for the above allegations against Officer Brown; and (2) requested that a separate log number investigation be initiated to address the conduct of Officers Powell and Foster.

According to the Certificate submitted by the Chief Administrator: (1) the Chief Administrator issued the recommendations for discipline on September 27, 2024; (2) the Chief Administrator received the Superintendent's written response on December 20, 2024; (3) the Chief Administrator's designees met with the Superintendent's designees and concluded their discussion of this matter on July 10, 2026; and (4) the Request for Review was sent via email to the Executive Director of the Police Board on July 13, 2026.

The Executive Director of the Police Board forwarded the Request for Review material to Kathryn Liss, the member of the Police Board who was selected on a random basis, pursuant to Article VI of the Police Board's Rules of Procedure ("Reviewing

Member”). The Reviewing Member reviewed the Request for Review pursuant to Section 2-78-130(a)(iii) of the Municipal Code of Chicago and Article VI of the Police Board’s Rules of Procedure. Following her initial review of this matter on July 24, 2026, the Reviewing Member requested, received, and reviewed the following material from the investigation file: body-worn camera video recordings from April 7, 2021.

OPINION

Following a thorough review of the Request for Review material and the additional items noted above, it is my opinion that the Superintendent did not meet the burden of overcoming the Chief Administrator’s recommendations for discipline of the above officers.

Regarding the allegations against Officer Brown, the Chief Administrator’s argument is persuasive that neither caselaw nor the facts of this case support the Superintendent’s finding that Officer Brown’s entry into the apartment was legally justified.

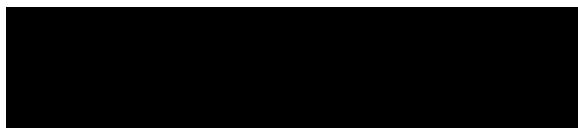
Regarding Officers Powell and Foster, the Superintendent’s request to open a separate log number investigation is not more reasonable than COPA’s decision to address the conduct of Officers Powell, Foster, and Brown in one investigation. The Superintendent has not cited any legal support for initiating a separate investigation, nor has the Superintendent provided any evidence that Officers Powell and Brown have been prejudiced by COPA’s decision to conduct one investigation. Additionally, COPA

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stated that it regularly combines incidents involving the same parties into one log number, noting that providing a statement to COPA can be both logistically and emotionally challenging for complainants, and requiring them to come in for more than one statement, for different log numbers, would create unnecessary barriers to assisting COPA with its investigations.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 2-78-130(a)(iii) of the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Chief Administrator's recommendations for discipline of Police Officers Gamera Brown, Star No. 13372, Niyell Powell, Star No. 13594, and Donovan Foster, Star No. 9515, shall be deemed accepted by the Superintendent.

DATED AT CHICAGO, COUNTY OF COOK, STATE OF ILLINOIS, THIS 28th
DAY OF JULY 2026.



KATHRYN LISS
Member
Police Board

Attested by:



MAX A. CAPRONI
Executive Director
Police Board