



CITY OF EUREKA City Manager

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July 22, 2016

RE: Eureka – Police Video - Press Statement

During a time of significant turmoil between police officers and the communities that they protect, the California Court of Appeals elected to release a video of a former Eureka police sergeant during the arrest of a minor. The availability of that dash cam video was a result of the Eureka City Council's foresight to fund the recording of police interactions during traffic stops and arrests. This particular video was brought to light as a result of a Eureka police officer who witnessed behavior that he felt should be reported and notified his command to the existence of the video. An Internal Affairs (IA) investigation was conducted and the sergeant ultimately separated employment from the City.

Under the Eureka Mayor and City Council, the City has sought to bring additional transparency and demonstrate that the police have been and are willing to proactively address internal problems. City leadership takes very seriously the abuse of police authority and has a zero tolerance level for abuse or prejudice. The City Attorney has worked with Chief Mills and other department heads to ensure cases of misconduct once sustained are aggressively prosecuted and appropriate disciplinary action sought, up to and including termination.

The case before the Court of Appeal, however, was not about transparency but about ensuring the protection of police officer personnel records. This is a right guaranteed by the California Constitution and state statutes. The City's intent in bringing the appeal was not to quash transparency but to ensure that the right of privacy of police officers in their personnel records was not eroded. According to City Attorney Cyndy Day-Wilson "It is unfortunate that the court gave little value to the fact that the videos are prepared for the purpose of evaluating officers. Instead, it focused on the timing of initiation of the formal investigation and when the video was taken."

Eureka has recently purchased body cameras for patrol officers and investigators to increase police accountability and collect evidence for future prosecutions. The Chief's Advisory Panel has the duty to review Internal Affairs' investigations, including the review of police video, to ensure the Department is accountable for its findings. For further information on this topic, the Body Worn Camera (BWC) policy can be found on the City website for public inspection. The City will nevertheless continue leading the way in the development of body cameras and police oversight.

The City is currently evaluating its options with regard to the release of the video.

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