



NEWS RELEASE

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ELPD Releases Findings of Internal Investigation at Public Meeting

20-037

February 27, 2020

EAST LANSING, Mich. — At a special public meeting held today, the East Lansing Police Department (ELPD) walked East Lansing City Councilmembers and members of the public through the findings of its internal investigation into an allegation of excessive force.

An internal investigation was initiated by East Lansing Police Chief Larry Sparkes on Friday, Feb. 14 after becoming aware of a Facebook post in which it was alleged that excessive force had been used during an arrest that was made on Sunday, Feb. 9 in the parking lot of downtown East Lansing's 7-Eleven. The investigation was initiated to determine if the department's Use of Force Policy had been violated and ELPD Capt. Chad Connelly – a 22-year law enforcement veteran with extensive experience managing criminal and internal investigations – was assigned as the lead investigator. The internal investigation included interviewing and taking separate statements from all officers involved as well as civilians. The investigation also involved reviewing all police reports, putting together a timeline of events, consulting with departmental use of force instructors and closely reviewing and cataloging video footage from multiple cameras, including in-car cameras, officer-worn body cameras and business security cameras. The investigation was completed on Tuesday, Feb. 25, at which time the findings were reviewed by Chief Sparkes.

From the internal investigation, it was established that during the early morning hours of Sunday, Feb. 9, ELPD officers observed three individuals involved in an altercation inside the 7-Eleven, which escalated to physical pushing and a punch

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Internal Investigation - continued

thrown as the individuals exited the store. Upon observing the physical altercation, officers moved in to arrest all three individuals involved. The first individual to be arrested resisted the officers, while the second individual was arrested without incident. The third individual to be arrested obstructed and hindered the police officers in the course of their duties while arresting the first individual. He also resisted his arrest and sustained an injury to his face during his arrest.

It was determined by Chief Sparkes at the conclusion of the investigation led by Capt. Connelly that because the video footage does not show how the injury occurred, there was insufficient evidence to clearly prove or disprove the excessive force claim. However, all officers and civilians that were interviewed as a part of the investigation stated that they did not witness excessive force being used during the arrest. While the video footage does not clearly show how the injury occurred, the videos do corroborate statements by all involved officers, including the fact that the individual resisted arrest.

“When officers are required to use force to make an arrest, injuries can occur to both the officers involved and the individuals being arrested,” said Chief Sparkes. “While we can’t prove or disprove how the injury occurred in this case, the control tactics that are visible in the video are consistent with the officers’ training, including the stabilization of the individual’s head. These types of control tactics are used by officers to limit injuries to the individuals being arrested and the officers themselves.”

“We understand this is a sensitive case and we remain committed to transparency with the public and investigating these types of cases thoroughly to ensure that departmental procedures and policies have not been violated,” said Chief Sparkes. “We also remain committed to consistently providing our officers with training to make sure they are prepared to do their jobs in a way that keeps themselves and the community as safe as possible, including de-escalation training, implicit bias training and current and best practices for use of force tactics.”

Community members can watch the recording of the Feb. 27 meeting at <https://cityofeastlansing.civicweb.net/document/27054?splitscreen=true&media=true>. Community members are advised that the video footage shared during this meeting does contain profanity and use of force police tactics.

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