



CLOSED CASE SUMMARY

ISSUED DATE: FEBRUARY 13, 2020

CASE NUMBER: 2019OPA-0653

Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings

Named Employee #1

Allegation(s):		Director's Findings
# 1	5.001 - Standards and Duties 10. Employees Shall Strive to be Professional	Sustained
Imposed Discipline		
Written Reprimand		

This Closed Case Summary (CCS) represents the opinion of the OPA Director regarding the misconduct alleged and therefore sections are written in the first person.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

It was alleged that the Named Employee sent a Department email in which he pejoratively referenced a community member's potential mental illness.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS:

Named Employee #1 - Allegations #1

5.001 - Standards and Duties 10. Employees Shall Strive to be Professional

In his capacity as the West Precinct desk officer, Named Employee #1 (NE#1) received a phone call from a community member. NE#1 later sent an email to another officer and a sergeant in which he relayed the contact with the community member and informed them she had requested a call back. In that email, in which NE#1 identified the community member's name and indicated that she was from "crazytown," NE#1 wrote: "Angry 220 [shorthand for an individual suffering from mental illness] wants to rant at you about collecting evidence." The email was later discovered by SPD's Legal Unit when processing a public records request. As they believed that NE#1 may have engaged in unprofessional conduct by sending the email, the Legal Unit forwarded this matter to OPA and this investigation ensued.

As part of its investigation, OPA interviewed NE#1. He acknowledged that the content of his email was disparaging to the community member. He told OPA that he: "was attempting to convey the demeanor and tone of the person that called [him], to the officer[s], so that they knew what they were going to have to deal with when they called her back." When asked whether the sending of this email was professional, he stated: "I don't know...setting aside my issue with the word professional when applied to policing. They're a skilled trade not a profession...I can see how it can be a problem for the high ups in the Department, and they would consider it unprofessional, yes." NE#1 said that, if he was presented with the same situation again, he would not have referred to "crazytown," but he would still have conveyed his "concerns to the officers about her sounding 220 when she called me."

SPD Policy 5.001-POL-10 requires that SPD employees "strive to be professional at all times." The policy further instructs that "employees may not engage in behavior that undermines public trust in the Department, the officer,



or other officers.” (SPD Policy 5.001-POL-10.) The policy further states the following: “Any time employees represent the Department or identify themselves as police officers or Department employees, they will not use profanity directed as an insult or any language that is derogatory, contemptuous, or disrespectful toward any person.” (*Id.*)

NE#1’s reference to “crazytown” in his email, as well as the overall tone and language he used, was derogatory, contemptuous, and disrespectful towards the community member. It further referred negatively to someone that was potentially suffering from a mental health crisis, which is inconsistent with the expectations of the Department and the community. While OPA recognizes NE#1’s stated regret for his actions, his email was highly inappropriate and constitutes a clear violation of policy. Accordingly, OPA recommends that this allegation be Sustained.

Recommended Finding: **Sustained**