



## CLOSED CASE SUMMARY

ISSUED DATE: APRIL 22, 2023

FROM: DIRECTOR GINO BETTS   
OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

CASE NUMBER: 2022OPA-0356

### **Allegations of Misconduct & Director's Findings**

Named Employee #1

Allegation(s):		Director's Findings
# 1	5.001 - Standards and Duties 5.001-POL 11. Employees Will Be Truthful and Complete in All Communication	Not Sustained - Unfounded
# 2	16.230 – Issuing Tickets and Traffic Warnings 16.230-POL 5. Officers Will Complete All Fields on the Front and Back of the Court Copy of the Paper Ticket	Not Sustained - Unfounded

***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:**

The Complainant alleged Named Employee #1 (NE#1), a parking enforcement officer, intentionally and wrongfully ticketed people. The Complainant also alleged NE#1 failed to photograph or enter the incident location for the tickets.

### **SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION:**

The Complainant filed two complaints. Both were sent to the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT).<sup>1</sup> OPA was notified about one. SDOT forwarded OPA the other.

The Complainant alleged NE#1 “wrongfully issued tickets to multiple [vehicles] parked in [Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ)] Zone 21 on June 14, 2022.”<sup>2</sup> The Complainant alleged NE#1 “patrolled the [area] for many years.” The Complainant believed “this was an intentional falsification.” The Complainant also alleged NE#1 did not take photographs and documented an address “one block East from our location, where RPZ Zone 21 is not in effect.” The Complainant indicated the ticketed individuals had permits “clearly and correctly displayed.”

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<sup>1</sup> On the date of the incident, parking enforcement officers were SDOT employees. Parking enforcement officers have since transferred to the Seattle Police Department.

<sup>2</sup> The Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ) program is a parking restriction system that creates permits for residents and short-term visitors. Residents may buy a certain number of permits that allow their vehicles, or those of their short-term guests, to park on street. See Restricted Parking Zones in Seattle, Fact Sheet, September 2017, available at [https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SDOT/ParkingProgram/rpz/RPZ\\_Factsheet.pdf](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/SDOT/ParkingProgram/rpz/RPZ_Factsheet.pdf).



OPA opened an investigation. During its investigation, OPA reviewed the complaints, NE#1's citation log, and two court citation packets for the June 14, 2022, citations. OPA also spoke with parking enforcement supervisors and interviewed NE#1.

NE#1's citation log showed NE#1 issued two citations in RPZ 21 on June 14, 2022. The citations were issued for parking in a "pay-to-park" zone without proof of payment. NE#1 included photos of the cited vehicles in both citation packages. OPA compared those pictures with Google Maps images and photos provided by a PEO supervisor. The comparison confirmed NE#1 recorded the correct address on both citations.

A PEO supervisor, Witness Supervisor #1 (WS#1), confirmed the area was a pay-to-park zone. WS#1 provided OPA with Seattle Parking Enforcement maps and a photograph of street signage to corroborate that information. Another PEO supervisor, Witness Supervisor #2 (WS#2), searched RPZ databases dating back to February 2018 and confirmed neither license plate associated with the June 14<sup>th</sup> citations had RPZ permits. However, WS#1 explained the two vehicles might have had guest RPZ permits, but that was irrelevant since they were parked in a pay-to-park area.

OPA interviewed NE#1. NE#1 said he worked as a parking enforcement officer for fourteen years. NE#1 said both June 14<sup>th</sup> citations were issued in a strictly pay-to-park area near an area that is pay-to-park and RPZ. NE#1 explained whether the vehicles had RPZ permits was immaterial because they were cited in a pay-to-park area.

OPA attempted to contact the Complainant by telephone and email without success. Accordingly, the Complainant was not interviewed.

#### **ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS:**

##### **Named Employee #1 - Allegation #1**

##### ***5.001 - Standards and Duties 5.001-POL 11. Employees Will Be Truthful and Complete in All Communication***

The Complainant alleged NE#1 issued citations that were "intentional falsification[s]."

Employees must be truthful and complete in all communications. SPD Policy 5.001-POL-11.

OPA found no evidence that either June 14<sup>th</sup> citation was inaccurate or intentionally dishonest. Accordingly, OPA recommends this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained - Unfounded**

##### **Named Employee #1 - Allegation #2**

##### ***16.230 – Issuing Tickets and Traffic Warnings 16.230-POL 5. Officers Will Complete All Fields on the Front and Back of the Court Copy of the Paper Ticket***

The Complainant alleged NE#1 inaccurately completed citation fields.

Officers must "complete all fields on the front and back of the court copy of the paper ticket." SPD Policy 16.230-POL-5.

Here, OPA found complete and accurate information on both June 14<sup>th</sup> citations.



Accordingly, OPA recommends this allegation be Not Sustained – Unfounded.

Recommended Finding: **Not Sustained - Unfounded**