

Investigation of the South Pasadena Police Department | Nine Officers Found in Violation of Policy

No information has been provided if any disciplinary action would be taken

By **Ben Tansey** - May 7, 2021



FILE PHOTO: Eric Fabbro | SouthPasadenan.com News | South Pasadena Police Department

After nearly six months of investigating, the city has sustained 21 of the 53 [complaints filed](#) by nearly a dozen residents against South Pasadena police officers stemming from events starting with [last summer's Black Lives Matter protests](#) through the [early November rally of Trump supporters](#).

Nine police officers were found to have violated an array of department policies including those related to conduct, efficiency, and supervision over, or response to, hate crimes. In addition, one complaint against former Chief Joe Ortiz for failing to ensure officers had sufficient training on how to deal with hate crimes was sustained. Two other complaints against Ortiz — for misusing public funds and for biased-based policing — were determined to be “unfounded.”

A total of eight complaints against seven officers were for “bias-based policing.” But none of those complaints were sustained, according to a review of the material released by the city.

During Wednesday's City Council session, outgoing City Manager Sean Joyce briefly addressed the findings.

“The independent investigator concluded that the South Pasadena Police Department does not engage in biased-based policing,” he said. “However, training is needed to recognize

when a crime should be considered a hate crime, and while that determination is ultimately up to the District Attorney, our police department has already begun retraining on the existing hate crime policy, as well as undertaken diversity training.”

A day earlier, Joyce announced his [decision to appoint Deputy Police Chief Brian Solinsky](#) the city’s new Chief of Police, noting among other things that Solinsky was ramping up the Department’s training efforts. Three of the complaints, including two for “bias-based policing,” were filed against Solinsky, but none were sustained.

During his first presentation as Chief, Solinsky — a 27-year veteran of the department — did not directly address the investigation. In brief remarks, he said his philosophy is to have a department that is “highly visible, accessible and responsive yet policing with compassion, purpose and in partnership with the community.”

A total of 18 complaints filed against a dozen other officers were not sustained or were ruled unfounded. Six of the officers against whom complaints were sustained also had a total of 12 complaints against them that were not sustained. The department has a total of 36 sworn officers, meaning complaints were sustained against a fully one-fourth of the department’s law enforcement personnel.

The investigation was conducted by [Garon Wyatt Investigative Services](#) of Nuevo, CA, to whom the city has paid just under \$40,000 this year alone for investigative services.

Joyce summarized the complaints, saying citizens felt the police “did not adequately address batteries upon a person of color as a hate crime, engaged in biased-based policing, did not thoroughly investigate complaints of other citizens regarding the conduct of some persons participating in the Freedom Rally, and expressed concerns regarding the former chief of police scheduling a prayer event last September which was subsequently cancelled.”

The investigative reports themselves are confidential, but the city made public a set of letters sent to the complainants that briefly outline the scope and findings of the investigations. The complainants were Fahren James, Elizabeth Ann Bagasao, Victoria Patterson, Alan Ehrlich, Jacinta Lincke, Stacey Mann, Ixchel Carrizales DeLara, London Lang, Veronica Carrizales, CareFirst, and two attorneys.

Four separate complaints were sustained against both Corporal Randy Wise and Corporal Gilbert Carrillo; three against Officer David Calderon; two against Officers Fernando Sandoval and Christina Roppo; and one each against Corporal Andrew DuBois, Sergeant Spencer Louie, and Detectives Michael Palmieri and Ryan Hang.

No information was provided as to what, if any, disciplinary action would be taken. Joyce, citing the penal code, said he would have no further public comment on the investigations. No council members offered any comment.

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Ben Tansey is a journalist and author. He grew up in the South Bay and is a graduate of Evergreen State College. He worked in Washington State as a reporter in a rural timber community and for many years as an editor for a Western electric energy policy publication based in Seattle. He and his wife Karin, an arts administrator from El Sereno, live in South Pasadena.