

OFFICIAL STATEMENT



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For Immediate Release

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GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – The Office of Oversight and Public Accountability (OPA) has recently learned of an incident that occurred on March 26, 2021 during a traffic stop in the area of Hall and Division in the City of Grand Rapids, involving members of the Grand Rapids Police Department (GRPD) and community members. OPA first became aware of this incident via social media and later received a media release prepared by the GRPD.

The conduct observed in the video that is being circulated on social media is concerning. This is a perfect example of an incident that should be closely monitored and evaluated by OPA. Unfortunately, due to circumstances outside of our control, OPA is not certain that monitoring will occur in this case. Since our inception, OPA has requested access to documents and evidence associated with internal affairs files in order to increase accountability and transparency and properly monitor internal affairs cases. Despite numerous requests, the police department has not provided OPA with any internal affairs documents – redacted or otherwise – on any case (with the exception of documents provided to the Civilian Appeal Board). Although I cannot guarantee that OPA will be granted access, I can guarantee that I will request information regarding this incident with the intent of thoroughly reviewing this matter.

In the event that OPA is granted access to GRPD Internal Affairs files (to the extent allowed by law), OPA will monitor and review this incident and other incidents involving the GRPD and alleged violations of both law and policy. The unfortunate reality is that GRPD controls access to its records and they have chosen to withhold those records which prevents OPA from fully doing our job. OPA will continue to push GRPD to stand behind the values stated in their Strategic Plan, and fully embrace accountability by providing OPA with lawful access to evidence and information. Grand Rapidians deserve the accountability and transparency that they have been promised.

OPA continues to encourage individuals that have grievances with the GRPD to file formal complaints by contacting OPA at (616) 456-4OPA (4672), or by contacting Internal Affairs directly at (616) 456-3480. OPA is willing and able to serve as a resource to community members who would like assistance with walking through the complaint process.