

TO: Members of the Seattle Community

FR: United States Federal Monitor of Seattle Police Department

DT: April 12, 2022

RE: Statement on Alleged Sexual Abuse of Vulnerable People by Members of the Seattle Police Department

There have been questions raised in recent months regarding alleged sexual misconduct perpetrated by Seattle Police Department officers against vulnerable populations. Investigations regarding alleged sexual misconduct is not within the scope of the federal monitor's mandate, and its limited role governed by terms of the consent decree. However, the federal monitor takes all allegations of systemic misconduct seriously and recognizes the importance of ensuring that such allegations are approached and addressed correctly within the judicial and administrative process.

On March 11, 2022, Federal Monitor Antonio Oftelie, as well as Associate Federal Monitors Ron Ward and Vanessa Wheeler, met with Seattle-based attorney Sarah Lippek and her colleague, Senait Misgina, at the federal courthouse in Seattle. The meeting was conducted to address concerns initially raised in emails and LinkedIn communications Lippek sent to the federal monitor in 2021 and early 2022. The federal monitoring team sought to better understand Lippek's allegations, the foundation for those allegations, why the federal monitor was contacted, and what further, if any, investigatory and/or accountability actions should be taken.

The participants had approximately a two-hour discussion on a wide range of alleged issues raised by Lippek and Misgina, including but not limited to:

- 1) the alleged failure by the Community Police Commission to disclose survey data purportedly collected in 2012 or 2013 related to police sexual misconduct against vulnerable populations;
- 2) the difficulties that would likely be faced by vulnerable populations in reporting;

- 3) alleged deficiencies in the investigative process for police sexual misconduct; and
- 4) alleged failures by the Office of the Inspector General and/or the Office of Police Accountability to properly respond to public records requests.

Lippek and Misgina did not present any actionable evidence of specific incidents or of a systemic problem in the SPD related to sexual misconduct, nor any survey data collected on the issue. In addition, no other organization or person has provided evidence or documentation on alleged SPD sexual misconduct to the federal monitor.

The federal monitoring team listened to Lippek's and Misgina's concerns and explained that the federal monitor could not act on any of these general allegations discussed, and that it was further unlikely that any action could be taken by any investigative agency without substantiation, whether through the form of credible witness testimony, documentary evidence, or both. Lippek indicated that she believed she could obtain such evidence, and the federal monitoring team encouraged her to do so in order that it might be presented to the proper authorities. The federal monitoring team offered any help that it could reasonably provide in the context of its role.

At this time, there are no further actions that can be taken by the federal monitor regarding alleged police sexual misconduct. There are other agencies that handle investigations of police misconduct, including the OIG and the OPA, when equipped with the proper and adequate documentation. The federal monitor will direct people to the appropriate authorities where possible, and welcomes active and engaged citizens to reach out if they have concerns regarding issues related to the consent decree or questions about its scope and actions.

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