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Monday, February 22, 2016

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MAYOR LEE ANNOUNCES COMPREHENSIVE POLICE DEPARTMENT REFORMS

Culture Change in Use of Force Policy & New Police Bureau to Build Community Trust & Increase Safety for City's Residents & Police Officers

San Francisco, CA—Today Mayor Edwin M. Lee joined by Police Commission President Suzy Loftus, Police Chief Greg Suhr and community leaders announced a comprehensive package of police reforms to increase public safety, build greater trust between police officers and the community and make the department more responsive, transparent and accountable. These efforts to fundamentally re-engineer the way that police officers use force include are wide-ranging, and include the creation of a new Bureau of Professional Standards & Principled Policing, major expansions to the Crisis Intervention Team network, new prohibitions on the use of firearms in specific circumstances, and a new Community Safety Initiative to recruit young people from San Francisco neighborhoods most impacted by violence to work with the Department to improve community trust.

“This comprehensive package of police reforms will help our sworn officers strengthen their ties with the community and keep our City safe through a culture change in how we handle conflicts on our streets,” said Mayor Lee. “Reforms include a review by the U.S. Department of Justice, our nation’s highest law enforcement authority, to improve upon policies, procedures and training related to use-of-force. These type of sweeping changes will need all of us – advocates, City officials, community members and police officers alike – to work together to rebuild community trust, and that’s what will help San Francisco remain one of the safest big cities in the nation. I want to thank Commission President Suzy Loftus for her hours upon hours of work with the community in the past few months, and Chief Suhr’s leadership in instituting reforms so quickly.”

In the immediate wake of the Mario Woods shooting, last December, Mayor Lee directed the Police Commission and Department to present a new plan to fundamentally re-engineer the way police officers use force. The Department surveyed policies from cities across the U.S. and consulted with experts to present this new vision for SFPD. The Police Commission directed the SFPD to immediately share this draft policy with a group of advocates, police officers, lawyers and others to ensure that the policy is vetted by the line officer and the civil libertarian alike. It will also be reviewed by the U.S. Department of Justice and presented at public meetings prior to final adoption by the Commission. Last week, the Commission presented the plan to Mayor Lee, and Mayor Lee is adopting these recommendations for police reform.

New policies and initiatives train officers that proportionality is key in decision making – in particular when using force and that policies must put the sanctity of life at the center of every decision. The goal is to reduce up to 80 percent of officer involved shootings by training officers and equipping them with the tools they need.

Re-engineering the SFPD Use of Force policies will create time, distance and use proportional force, and continues immediate steps that have been taken and larger efforts that are underway to reduce lethal force and build trust with the communities SFPD is sworn to serve:

- The Department issued the following immediate policy and equipment changes:
 - Any time an SFPD officers points their gun at a suspect, it is a reportable use of force
 - A Supervisor is now mandated to respond to the scene of any call involving a weapon.
 - Firearms qualification for all SFPD was re-engineered from a 2 hour firearms qualification to an 8 hour “Force Options” training
 - All patrol vehicles are now equipped with helmets and 3 foot long batons to aid in situations where officers need to create time and distance from someone with an edged weapon
 - The supply of less lethal bean bag supplies have been doubled
- Expanding and funding Crisis Intervention Teams – including improving the technology of how CIT officers are dispatched to scenes of people in crisis
- Developing an “Edged Weapon” protocol to better equip officers with the skills needed to create time and distance from suspects armed with edged weapons
- Working to secure training and additional equipment to be used as protective shields to aid in creating time and distance
- At Mayor Lee’s direction, the Department is seeking approval from the Commission to use Electronic Control Devices for Tactical Division and Specialists. This will be decided along with their proposed revisions to the Use of Force Departmental General Order.

Mayor Lee and Chief Suhr have also invited the Department of Justice (DOJ) to conduct a collaborative review of the Department’s policies and practices and are now partnering to review the Use of Force Policy. The SFPD created the First-Ever Bureau of Professional Standards and Principled Policing to oversee proposed reforms and coordinate closely with the DOJ’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) through its Collaborative Reform Initiative. Chief Suhr has appointed Deputy Chief Tony Chaplain to lead the SFPD Bureau of Professional Standards & Principled Policing, and the Police Commission will hire a Policy Analyst to assist in advancing new policy initiatives.

The Police Commission also requested that the City full fund the Office of Citizen Complaints (OCC)’s budget request to improve their ability to quickly complete thorough investigations and follow best practices around transcribing interviews to aid in investigations of misconduct.

Other parts of the proposed comprehensive package of police reforms include:

- Data Transparency and Technology Solutions
- Eliminate Bias and Improve Cultural Competency
- Investing in Community Safety Initiatives
- Recruiting a Diverse Force
- Implement 21st Century Policing Recommendations from President Obama’s Task Force
- Academic Partnership for Evaluation

Mayor Lee, in his SFPD hiring plan, has accelerated the hiring of 250 new police officers over the next two years. The hiring plan will allow the City to meet its mandatory staffing requirement of 1,971 officers in June of 2017, a full year ahead of schedule. Through the budget process, he has increased civilian oversight, provided more training for officers and is deploying body cameras for every SFPD police officer on the street. The Mayor’s hiring plan is complimented by the new Community Safety Initiative to recruit young people from within the City’s diverse communities that are most impacted by violence. Recruitment of sworn police officers from the City’s hardest-to-serve young people that have been exposed to long-term and repeated adversity and

violence can play a critical role in interrupting and stopping the cycle of violence, provide healthy interaction with police officers and will improve community trust.

To read the letter from Police Commission President Suzy Loftus and Police Chief Greg Suhr, go to:
<http://sfmayor.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=484>.

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