



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MAYOR WILLIAM PEDUTO

June 3, 2020

Ms. Erin Bruni
Manager
Office of Municipal Investigations
City-County Building
414 Grant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Dear Ms. Bruni,

I am writing to you in my official capacity as the Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh. On Monday, June 1, 2020, a peaceful march for justice and police reform was organized in East Liberty. I was on the scene from 16:00 until 19:00 (Military/24-hour time). During this time, I witnessed a peaceful interaction between the marchers and the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police. However, much of that changed between 19:08:41 and 19:50:10. During those 42 minutes, there were several interactions between the march participants and the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police. In order to provide clarity to the actions that occurred that day and provide third party, independent, professional analysis and recommendations, I am requesting the Office of Municipal Investigations to conduct a full investigation into the actions in East Liberty on Monday, June 1, 2020.

For the past 36 hours, I have studied best practices of less lethal crowd dispersion, I have read countless comments on social media and viewed first-hand video, photographs and accounts. The Public Safety Director provided me with the written official transcripts of all Command operations during that day and I have talked with every person in the Command rank who was on the ground or in the Command Center. Without question, there is a difference of opinion about what happened that day and the appropriateness of the actions of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police.

In order to answer these questions, I am asking you to look at a number of specific questions that have been presented. My hope is that a clear consensus of the events and recommendations that will assist us to do better will be found. Toward that end, I have also requested the Citizen Police Review Board to conduct a second, independent investigation. I have requested that the CPRB include the NAACP, the ACLU and the US Attorney's Office in their work. There should be enough evidence, evaluation and findings to get a clear idea of what happened and how operations during a protest should occur.

My specific requests of the investigation are in four broad and essential areas regarding events of June 1, 2020: Communication, Tactical Operations, Events at Centre & Negley, and Police/Protester Conflicts. Your work is absolutely essential in providing us with clarity as we move ahead in developing stronger Police-Community relations. We must have relations that are built on facts, best practices, understanding and compassion.

Communication

- What actions were taken before the event in order to communicate with the leaders of the march?
- What actions were taken during the march in order to assure a safe, peaceful protest for all involved?
- What recognition and communication was made with African-American leaders to provide contacts and other critical information?
- What was the specific use of the Civil Affairs Unit and what actions did they take during the event?

Tactical Operations

- At what time was gas deployed and where?
- Who requested the switch from smoke to gas, and who approved the order? Was it properly reflected in the radio transcripts?
- What was the necessity and proportionality of the use of less lethal operations?*
- Were PBP body-worn cameras activated?
- Was the proper chain of command followed before the use of less lethal tactics, in all areas of East Liberty?*
- What was done in order to avoid less lethal operations and provide alternatives before it was dispersed?*
- What other law enforcement agencies were present in East Liberty? What are their policies regarding less lethal use?
- What was the necessity and proportionality of the deployment of riot gear?*
- What is the PBP training on protests and the de-escalation of force during a protest?
- What is the PBP training on Implicit Bias?
- Who was stationed on the roof of Target in BDUs? What was the necessity and proportionality of their operation?*
- (*The answers to these questions need to be answered by an outside third party expert/organization that is completely independent of police, local or state officials. Their findings should include recommendations of improvements to Tactical Operations.)

Events at Centre & Negley

- An analysis of video and audio evidence, both internally and from the general public that was at the scene, from 19:08:41 (skirmish line established) to 19:50:10 (Centre Avenue Group convening).
- An investigation into the report of 19:20:12 of bottles and projectiles being thrown at PBP officers and actions that followed until the deployment of smoke at 19:27:57.
- An investigation into the deployment of less lethal operations at 19:27:57. What was used? What evidence is there to prove it?
- What communication with leaders of the march occurred between the establishment of the skirmish line and the deployment of less lethal operations?
- What was the activity of the Civil Affairs Unit during this time, to lessen Police-Community friction?
- What evidence is there into the report of 19:20:22 of bottles & projectiles being thrown at PBP?
- What actions were taken between 19:20:22 and 19:27:57 (when less lethal operations were deployed) in order to avoid use of less lethal?
- What communication with protest leaders occurred between 19:20:12 and 19:27:57 to disperse the crowd?

- What was the specific use of less lethal tactics utilized by the PBP, County SWAT, PSP, other agencies?
- What was the number of reported injuries, to whom and how?
- What evidence was there to determine this was an Unlawful Assembly?

Police/Protester Conflicts of June 1, 2020 in East Liberty

- Please provide a review and evidence of the reported crimes that occurred during and after this march. This list should include any and all reports of inappropriate Police actions or other crimes reported by the public. It is critical to understand the actual situation that was occurring on June 1, 2020 and if these reports can be backed up with evidence.

Prior to dispensing of less lethal tactics:

- 16:40:28 Sneaker Villa door smashed with rocks. Entry denied by bars.
- 16:52:53. Photographer attacked. Tried to steal cameras.
- 17:31:56. Small mulch area lit on fire.
- 18:55:35. Attempted window smash at shoe store. Stopped by other protesters.
- 18:58:51. Another cameraman assaulted.
- 19:03:35. Dollar Bank window smashed. No entry.
- 19:04:40. TV Cameraman chased out of the area.
- 19:20:12. PBP assaulted with bottles and projectiles.

After the beginning of less lethal tactics:

- 19:27:57. PBP pelted with rocks and bottles.
- 19:34:06. EMS Physician van vandalized.
- 19:35:06. Fire set in road at 5700 Baum Boulevard.
- 19:40:49. PBP pelted with rocks and projectiles.

I realize this is a much more specific request than I have asked for in the past. It is only through facts backed by evidence, best practices based on experience and understanding based on seeing all sides, that we can make well informed decisions and create better public policy. Given the very reason these protests are occurring, and the desperate need to protect black lives, it is imperative that we are transparent and accountable in our actions.

Sincerely,



William Peduto
Mayor of Pittsburgh