



# City of Seattle

Seattle Police Department

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May 2, 2016

Director Pierce Murphy  
Office of Professional Accountability  
720 Third Avenue, 18<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Seattle, WA 98104

Re: 2015OPA-1535 Management Action Recommendations

Dear Director Murphy:

I am writing in response to your management action recommendation arising from your review of 2015OPA-1535, regarding an allegation that an officer was using his position in the Department to personally profit from the sale of clothing branded with SPD and SPD specialty unit logos. Although OPA did not find evidence that the officer had personally profited from the sales, you did identify concerns about the practice of SPD units selling SPD-branded items and asked me to undertake further inquiry into the practice.

As I understand the history, prior to the establishment of the Seattle Police Foundation, it was common practice among specialty units in the Department to sell unit-branded items (clothing, mugs, pins, e.g.) for various purposes, such as unit morale (to fund unit t-shirts, potlucks, etc.), to raise money for charities, or to purchase equipment or gear that was outside of the Department's budget. Typically, such items are procured for sale through seed money donated by members of the unit, on a voluntary basis, with profits directed towards the unit. Although this practice has lessened as the Foundation has grown, it continues among some units, with varying degrees of organization.

In general, I do not have any ethical concerns with the practice itself, which I know is not unusual in departments around the country. I also understand that there no copyright or trademark infringement issues involved in the practice. In that absence of any evidence that the practice is being abused, I am not going to issue a directive to halt sales at this time. I will, however, reach out to the ethics and elections director to confirm my understanding that nothing about such practice runs afoul of the City's ethics code.

I absolutely agree with your concerns regarding the need to conduct an audit to determine how widespread this practice is, and the need to develop clear policies regulating and with respect to the reporting such activity. I have, accordingly, directed our Audit, Policy and Research Section to add this subject to their queue.

Director Pierce Murphy

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Thank you for bringing this to my attention. As always, please let me know if you would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,



Kathleen M. O'Toole  
Chief of Police

cc: Judge Anne Levinson (Ret.)  
Deputy Chief Carmen Best  
Brian Maxey, Chief Operating Officer  
Assistant Chief Lesley Cordner  
Rebecca Boatright, Senior Police Counsel