



Barry M. Weber
Chief of Police

WAUWATOSA POLICE DEPARTMENT

1700 NORTH 116TH STREET
WAUWATOSA, WISCONSIN 53226-0426
(414) 471-8430
FAX (414) 471-8447

Public Information Office
414-471-8430
piowpd@wauwatosa.net

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NEWS RELEASE

The Wauwatosa Police Department concurs with the decision of the Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office regarding the death of Alvin Cole on February 2, 2020

The death of Alvin Cole on February 2nd was a tragedy, and the Wauwatosa Police Department sympathizes with his family as they, and others, continue to grieve the loss of their loved one. The administration of justice demands a legal and purposeful review of the facts. That was done in this case. Police officers are put into difficult situations that require a decision to be made in fractions of seconds. The Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office has concluded that Wauwatosa Police Officer Joseph Mensah's decision to use deadly force on February 2nd was justified and reasonable according to the legal foundation of the laws of our state.

The Wauwatosa Police Department is currently conducting an internal administrative review of the February 2nd incident to examine the performance of all Wauwatosa Police Department personnel as it relates to the proper following of department rules, regulations, policies, and procedures. The findings of that review, along with any action recommendations, will be reported to me, the Chief of Police.

Unrelated to this announcement today, Officer Mensah remains on administrative suspension pending ongoing proceedings with the Wauwatosa Police and Fire Commission. The timeline for conclusion of those proceedings is unknown at this time.

The Wauwatosa Police Department is dedicated to providing professional police service. The department hears the message from the public, and recognizes the evolution required for law enforcement agencies in this age. This is a time for learning. We want to do a better job of sharing with our community what our officers do to progress our policing. Here are a few of the initiatives we have taken, year-to-date:

- All Wauwatosa Police Department policies and procedures have been uploaded to the department's website for public view.
- Six sworn officers have attended Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) this year. The department now has 13 CIT officers, and plans to increase that number.
- All officers are currently receiving training on implicit bias.
- Testing of body-worn camera equipment has concluded, and the Wauwatosa Common Council has approved the purchase of body-worn cameras for all officers, with full implementation scheduled for January of 2021.

In addition to those actions, our department continues to train regularly on all unified tactics, and includes techniques and topics related to the practice of de-escalation. All of our officers know that the use of deadly force is a last resort.

Lastly, the Wauwatosa Police Department is committed to protecting this community. The United States Constitution affirms freedom of speech and the right of the people to peaceably assemble, however, civil disorder or disruption is not protected by the 1st Amendment. Our officers will always work to uphold their sworn oath of office by defending the Constitution, enforcing the statutes of Wisconsin, and the ordinances of Wauwatosa.

We ask the members of our community to do their part in maintaining order and safety, and to support our efforts moving forward.

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