



Bruins 3, Penguins 4, Final

20 Medford police officers suspended without pay in probe of details at construction site

By [Danny McDonald](#) and [Travis Andersen](#) Globe Staff, Updated September 26, 2019, 8:59 p.m.



A police cruiser parked on Baxter Street in Medford. JOSH REYNOLDS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Twenty Medford police officers were suspended without pay, and must collectively repay the city thousands of dollars, for violating the department's detail policy while working on a public construction project last year, officials said

Thursday.

Seven other officers were also reprimanded through a written letter as part of an investigation into allegations that the detail policy was not followed on the [construction project](#) in 2018, Mayor Stephanie M. Burke and Police Chief Jack Buckley said in a joint statement.

The statement did not disclose how the policy was violated, but said that all of the officers who were disciplined “received a prohibition on participation in details for various periods.”

They must also repay compensation they received “that was not in conformity with the department detail policy” before Oct. 4.

Such compensation totals about \$17,000, according to Burke’s office. Individual officers have to pay back amounts ranging from \$230 to \$2,000, a mayoral spokeswoman said.

The length of the suspensions ranged between 2 days and 30 days, according to the mayor’s office. The punishments were based on the severity of the violation.

In the statement, Burke said she was “dismayed and disappointed with the actions of some members” of the department.

“However, I remain confident that in concert with the Chief of Police, we handled this matter swiftly, professionally, and with veracity,” she said.

The mayor’s office declined to detail the length of detail prohibition for the officers involved, saying it was personnel matter. A spokeswoman also declined to discuss the specifics of how the detail policy was violated.

Those punished included a mix of patrolmen and supervisors, with some lieutenants and sergeants cited for failure to supervise, according to the mayor's office.

No names of the disciplined police were released.

In the statement, Buckley said he was disappointed with the "findings of the investigation," but added, "I have faith in the women and men of the Medford Police Department and believe that the discipline imposed is appropriate to correct behavior."

A message left with the union representing the city's patrol officers was not immediately returned Thursday night.

The city's police department has about 105 officers. City records show that more than 20 patrolmen in Medford topped \$150,000 in pay last year, including three patrolmen who made more than \$200,000. Those patrolmen made tens of thousands of dollars in overtime pay, according to records.

The construction site in question was the replacement of Cradock Bridge, a span that carries Main Street over the Mystic River, and the city found out about the detail allegations through civil litigation, a mayoral spokeswoman said.

Without exception, Medford officials said in the Thursday release, "during the period of September 6, 2019 to September 11, 2019 each one of the . . . officers on whom findings were made accepted the specific discipline that had been determined."

The statement also noted that Middlesex District Attorney Marian T. Ryan "is aware of this matter."

A spokeswoman for Ryan's office said Thursday, "We are aware of the matter but it has not been referred to us."

The probe began in June, when Burke learned of “the possibility that the departmental detail policy of the Medford Police Department was not being followed at a singular construction project,” the release said. Thursday’s statement did not specify how the allegations came to light.

She consulted with Buckley and City Solicitor Mark Rumley before ordering an independent probe led by retired State Police Captain Paul L’Italien, who now runs L’Italien Investigations, the city said. His review began quickly and concluded by the end of August, according to the statement.

Burke had directed that L’Italien “be given unlimited access to all records, data and personnel of the department,” the statement said. “Her intention was that the course of the investigation be as wide and as deep as the independent investigator alone chose it to be.”

The release added, “According to Mr. L’Italien, he received the full cooperation of the officers and his inquiries were largely answered candidly and without reservation.”

The Massachusetts State Police is in the midst of its [own scandal](#) regarding overtime abuse. Forty-six troopers have been implicated in a payroll fraud scheme that included writing phony tickets and falsifying timesheets to collect overtime pay for hours they never worked. Eight troopers have pleaded guilty to embezzlement. Two others face charges.

Medford officials said L’Italien was well-equipped to conduct the detail review, noting he “came with the highest recommendation with outstanding background and credentials.”

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