



MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL POLICE REFORM STEPS UNDER THE BUFFALO REFORM AGENDA

These additional reforms will limit the use of “no-knock” search warrants by police officers and explain in greater detail how the new Public Protection Detail will operate

Buffalo, NY—Mayor Byron W. Brown announced the latest actions his Administration is taking under the Buffalo Reform Agenda. Under Mayor Brown’s direction the Buffalo Police Department, when it is the agency responsible for executing a search warrant, will no longer request permission for a “no knock” search warrant from a judge unless there is a clear danger to the safety of the community or an officer. Additionally, the Mayor explained how the Public Protection Detail (PPD) will utilize each police district chief’s existing community policing network to coordinate with individuals and groups that wish to hold peaceful demonstrations. This new community policing approach will build on the relationships that the Buffalo Police Department’s chiefs and their designees have with the community. The PPD will report to Deputy Police Commissioner Barbara Lark.

Mayor Brown said, “Today’s announcements are another step in improving the operations of the Buffalo Police Department. ‘No knock’ search warrants are a tool that is best used infrequently, selectively, and only when there is a legitimate concern for community or officer safety. Overuse of that tool creates an environment that actually endangers officers and erodes residents’ expectation of constitutional protections within their homes. Protecting the constitutional rights of residents, and especially Black residents who experienced systemic racism, is a primary concern. That is why we are also establishing the Public Protection Detail to safeguard residents’ First Amendment rights.”

Only the courts have the ability to issue warrants that do not require law enforcement to announce their presence before entering a building. The Mayor’s Executive Order will instruct Buffalo Police Commissioner Byron C. Lockwood to adopt a policy that substantially limits the circumstances under which the Department makes an application for a “no knock” warrant request from a judge. Otherwise, officers will adhere to a “Knock and Announce” policy and give individuals a reasonable amount of time to allow entry.

Today’s second announcement represents a new approach to protecting residents’ right to free expression and public demonstration. Individual district chiefs have historically worked with community members planning events through community policing efforts and personal contacts. The PPD will formalize that process and convert the policing of public demonstrations into another community policing function that relies on communication, information sharing, coordination, and voluntary cooperation. This coordinated

effort will be overseen by Buffalo Police Deputy Commissioner Barbara Lark who will work directly with the district chiefs, the chiefs' designees, personnel from the City Law Department and City community liaisons. This shift in posture, from enforcement to protection, will reduce the likelihood of dangerous confrontations between officers and demonstrators, promote the use of non-violent techniques at demonstrations, foster greater awareness and consideration for residents' property, and allow police to more effectively employ de-escalation techniques when event attendees pose a potential problem to other demonstrators and residents. Individuals will be able to contact the PPD via email at PPD@bpdny.org or by calling 851-5909.

The City community liaisons are:

- Shatorah Donovan, Chief Diversity Officer
- Oswaldo Mestre, Director of the Office of Citizen Services and Chief Service Officer
- Jessica Lazarin, First Deputy Corporation Counsel and Director of the Office of New Americans
- Kenneth Simmons, Director of Youth Recreation Services and a Chaplain to the Buffalo Police Department
- Juweria Dahir, Community Engagement Planner.

As a function of the new PPD, individuals who wish to report an incident at a public demonstration where their rights were violated may do so by filing a report with the Police Department's Internal Affairs Division and making it to the attention Deputy Commissioner Lark. Contact information for the Internal Affairs Department may be found at: <https://www.bpdny.org/157/Internal-Affairs-Division>.

These steps are only the latest in a series of reform initiatives the Mayor has launched over the course of the summer following the killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. A summary of the other initiatives contained in the Buffalo Reform Agenda and updates to the Police Department's policies and procedures may be found online at: <https://www.buffalony.gov/1315/Buffalo-Reform-Agenda#:~:text=The%20Buffalo%20Reform%20Agenda%20is,it%20is%20meant%20to%20serve>.

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