

BEFORE THE POLICE BOARD OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

IN THE MATTER OF CHARGES FILED AGAINST)	
SERGEANT EDWARD LEIGHTON,)	No. 23 PB 3026
STAR No. 1049, DEPARTMENT OF POLICE,)	
CITY OF CHICAGO,)	
)	(CR No. 2019-3507)
RESPONDENT.)	

ORDER

On April 21, 2023, the Superintendent of Police filed with the Police Board of the City of Chicago charges against Sergeant Edward Leighton, Star No. 1049 (“Respondent”), recommending that Respondent be discharged from the Chicago Police Department (“Department” or “CPD”) for violating the Department’s Rules of Conduct. Respondent is charged, *inter alia*, with making unwanted sexual advances and physical contact with a woman while on a date with her and with possessing his service weapon when there was a likelihood that he would be consuming alcoholic beverages. (A copy of the charges is attached as Exhibit A.)

On June 4, 2024, the Superintendent filed a Motion to Withdraw Charges (“Motion”) against Respondent. The Motion states: “Acknowledging the evidentiary difficulties in this case, including additional details that have come to light, the parties now wish to avoid the expense, uncertainty, and burden of continuing the hearing on the Charges.” The Motion further states that the Superintendent and Respondent have reached a settlement agreeing that if the Board grants the Motion, the Superintendent will impose and Respondent will accept a suspension of 365 days for the charged rule violations. The Motion includes a factual background, reasons for the settlement agreement, and several exhibits, including the settlement agreement. The Police Board has reviewed the Motion and its exhibits.

Police Board Case No. 23 PB 3026
Sergeant Edward Leighton
Order

After considering this matter, the Police Board finds that the parties have met the requirements of Section II-E of the Board's Rules of Procedure and that there are compelling reasons for the Board to approve the proposed settlement and grant the Motion. At a hearing on the charges, the Superintendent must prove the charges against Respondent by a preponderance of the evidence. *See generally Clark v. Bd. of Fire & Police Comm'rs of the Vill. of Bradley*, 613 N.E.2d 826 (Ill. App. Ct. 1993). In the Motion, the Superintendent states that he will be challenged in carrying this burden because of information that has come to light that bears on the credibility of the woman with whom Respondent was on the date and because she is resistant to testify at a hearing on the charges. The Superintendent further states that the woman and Respondent are the only known witnesses to charged conduct, there is no evidence such as video footage of their encounter known to exist, and the woman's and Respondent's accounts diverge as to many salient details of their interactions.

The Board finds credible the Superintendent's conclusion that it is extremely unlikely that the Superintendent would be able to meet the burden of proving the charges or that discharging Respondent from the CPD is warranted as originally recommended. In light of the woman's resistance to testifying to the details of her encounter with Respondent and Respondent's acceptance of full accountability for his actions and lapse in judgment while off duty, it appears prudent to impose a 365-day suspension without pay rather than holding a hearing on the charges during which the Superintendent likely could not meet the burden of proof.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that, for the reasons set forth above, the Superintendent's Motion to Withdraw Charges is **granted**, and the proceedings before the Police Board are terminated.

Police Board Case No. 23 PB 3026
Sergeant Edward Leighton
Order

This Order is adopted and entered by a majority of the members of the Police Board:
Kyle Cooper, Paula Wolff, Claudia Badillo, Mareilé Cusack, Nanette Doorley, Andreas Safakas,
and Justin Terry.

DATED AT CHICAGO, COUNTY OF COOK, STATE OF ILLINOIS, THIS 20th DAY
OF JUNE 2024.

Attested by:

/s/ KYLE COOPER
President

/s/ MAX A. CAPRONI
Executive Director

RECEIVED A COPY OF THIS ORDER

THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2024.

LARRY SNELLING
Superintendent of Police

Exhibit A

Charges

CHARGES AGAINST SERGEANT EDWARD LEIGHTON

Sergeant Edward Leighton, Star Number 1049, is charged with violating the following rules contained in Article V of the Rules and Regulations of the Chicago Police Department, which were in full force and effect on the date of the alleged violations:

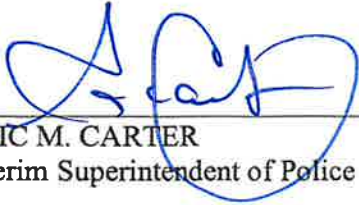
- Rule 2: Any action or conduct which impedes the Department's efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department.
- Rule 6: Disobedience of any order or directive, whether written or oral.
- Rule 8: Disrespect or maltreatment of any person, while on or off duty.

SPECIFICATIONS

1. On or about August 29, 2019, in the vicinity of Open Outcry Brewing Company, 10934 S. Western, in Chicago, Illinois, Police Sergeant Edward Leighton engaged in unwanted and/or otherwise non-consensual sexual advances toward and/or physical contact with [REDACTED], including after she said "stop" or words to that effect, including, for example: kissing her; grabbing her by her neck; touching her breasts; touching her vagina over her clothes; attempting to unbutton and/or unzip her pants; and/or pulling her bra down. Sergeant Leighton thereby violated:
 - a. Rule 2: Any action or conduct which impedes the Department's efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department.
 - b. Rule 8: Disrespect or maltreatment of any person, while on or off duty.
2. On or about August 29, 2019, in the vicinity of Open Outcry Brewing Company, 10934 S. Western, in Chicago, Illinois, Police Sergeant Edward Leighton engaged in unwanted sexual advances toward [REDACTED], in that he stated words to the effect of "let me get a little taste of you" and/or "then you get a little taste of me." Sergeant Leighton thereby violated:
 - a. Rule 2: Any action or conduct which impedes the Department's efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department.
 - b. Rule 8: Disrespect or maltreatment of any person, while on or off duty.
3. On or about August 29, 2019, in the vicinity of Open Outcry Brewing Company, 10934 S. Western, in Chicago, Illinois, Police Sergeant Edward Leighton was in possession of his weapon when there was a likelihood that he would be consuming alcoholic beverages which may impair his physical and/or mental abilities. Sergeant Leighton thereby violated:

- a. Rule 2: Any action or conduct which impedes the Department's efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department.
- b. Rule 6: Disobedience of any order or directive, whether written or oral (here, U04-02, "Department Approved Weapons and Ammunition," effective June 2, 2017).

Based on the foregoing charges and specifications, the Superintendent recommends that Sergeant Edward Leighton, Star Number 1049, be separated from the Chicago Police Department.



ERIC M. CARTER
Interim Superintendent of Police

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

/s/ Ashley S. White
ASHLEY WHITE
Assistant Corporation Counsel

FILED: April 21, 2023
POLICE BOARD
Case No. 23 PB 3026