

**BEFORE A MEMBER OF THE POLICE BOARD
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO**

IN THE MATTER OF THE)	
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISCIPLINE OF)	
SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER LIAKOPOULOS, STAR No. 2681,)	No. 24 RR 08
AND)	
POLICE OFFICER RUBEN REYNOSO, STAR No. 5621,)	No. 24 RR 09
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE,)	
CITY OF CHICAGO.)	(CR No.
)	2022-3054)

REQUEST FOR REVIEW

On November 8, 2024, the Executive Director of the Police Board of the City of Chicago received from the Chief Administrator of the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) a request for review of the Chief Administrator’s recommendations for discipline of Sergeant Christopher Liakopoulos, Star No. 2681, and Police Officer Ruben Reynoso, Star No. 5621, arising out of the investigation of Complaint Register No. 2022-3054 (“Request for Review”).

The following facts, which are based on COPA’s accounting of the incident and a review of nearby business video cameras, form the basis of the instant request:

In the morning of July 22, 2022, Sergeant Christopher Liakopoulos (“Sergeant Liakopoulos”) and Officer Ruben Reynoso (“Officer Reynoso”) were driving an unmarked Chicago Police Department (“CPD”) vehicle westward on 18th Street when Officer Reynoso pointed out another group of individuals that he believed were doing graffiti. The officers reversed their car to approach these individuals. As the officers were reversing, two individuals—later identified as Miguel Medina and [A.A.*]—approached the officers’ unmarked police vehicle. Officer Reynoso rolled down his passenger-side window, displayed his badge,

*[Initials are used to protect the privacy of the person, who was a minor at the time of the incident.]

Nos. 24 RR 08-09
Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso
Request for Review and Opinion

and asked what the individuals were doing. As he was approaching the vehicle, [A.A.] displayed and pointed a weapon at the officers. Because [A.A.] pointed a weapon at them, Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso discharged their weapons, and as a result of this gunfire, Medina (who did not have a weapon) suffered multiple gunshot wounds. [A.A.] then fled the scene, and as he was fleeing, he fired one shot in the officers' direction. The officers returned a combined 20 rounds at [A.A.]. Sergeant Liakopoulos continued to pursue [A.A.] on foot but was unable to apprehend him. A bystander was also shot during the gunfire.

While Sergeant Liakopoulos was pursuing [A.A.], Officer Reynoso remained near the police vehicle. Officer Reynoso did not render aid to Medina at that time. According to Sergeant Liakopoulos, a witness stated that [A.A.] doubled-back in the direction of the original scene, so Sergeant Liakopoulos returned to warn his partner and opened the trunk of their vehicle to retrieve a police bullet-proof vest and look for a LEMART kit, a type of first aid kit. Shortly after Sergeant Liakopoulos returned to the original scene, an individual with a medical background asked if he could render aid to Medina, and both officers agreed.

Following the conclusion of the investigation, the Chief Administrator issued recommendations for discipline of Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso. The Chief Administrator recommended that the following allegations against both Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso be *Sustained*:

1. Discharging a firearm at or in the direction of Miguel Medina in violation of CPD General Order G03-02;
2. Discharging a firearm at or in the direction of [A.A.] in violation of CPD General Order G03-02;
3. Failing to render aid to Miguel Medina in violation of CPD General Order G03-06; and
4. Failing to secure the scene in violation of CPD General Order G03-06, Section VI-B-2.

Nos. 24 RR 08-09
Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso
Request for Review and Opinion

The Chief Administrator recommended that Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso be discharged from the Chicago Police Department.

The Superintendent disagreed with the Chief Administrator's recommendations for discipline, arguing that the officers complied with CPD General Orders G03-02, G03-06, and G03-06(VI)(B)(2), and the Superintendent proposed no discipline for Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso.

According to the Certificate submitted by the Chief Administrator: (1) the Chief Administrator issued the recommendation for discipline on September 28, 2023; (2) the Chief Administrator received the Superintendent's written response on December 21, 2023; (3) the Chief Administrator's designees met with the Superintendent's designees and concluded their discussion of this matter on November 8, 2024; and (4) the Request for Review was sent via email to the Executive Director of the Police Board on November 8, 2024.

The Executive Director of the Police Board prepared and forwarded the Request for Review file to Steven Block, the member of the Police Board who was selected on a random basis, pursuant to Article VI of the Police Board's Rules of Procedure ("Reviewing Member"). The Reviewing Member reviewed the Request for Review pursuant to Section 2-78-130(a)(iii) of the Municipal Code of Chicago and Article VI of the Police Board's Rules of Procedure. Following his initial review of this matter on November 23, 2024, the Reviewing Member requested, received and reviewed video recordings of the incident from the investigative file.

OPINION

It is my opinion that, based on a thorough review of the Request for Review material, the Superintendent has met his burden of overcoming the Chief Administrator's recommendation for

discipline as to Sergeant Liakopoulos. As to Officer Reynoso, the Superintendent has met his burden of overcoming the Chief Administrator's recommendation for discipline as to the discharging of a firearm, but not as to the allegations stemming from failure to render aid or secure the scene. The following sets forth my reasoning:

Discharging a firearm. While it is extremely unfortunate that two unarmed individuals, including a bystander, were injured in this incident, neither Sergeant Liakopoulos's nor Officer Reynosa's use of their weapons was unjustified or violated the Department's general orders. Indeed, it was [A.A.] who brandished a firearm as he and Medina approached the officers' vehicle, and it was only then that Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynosa rightfully discharged their firearms. The officers only discharged the second set of shots after [A.A.] turned and shot at them as he was running away. The officers' use of their weapons after having a gun pointed in their direction and then after having been shot at is uncontrovertibly justified and comports with the Department's general orders. COPA is wrong to suggest otherwise. To the contrary, the officers used their judgment, working to contain the threat that an armed [A.A.] posed even as he was fleeing. As a result, the Superintendent has met his burden in overcoming COPA's recommendation as to the allegations of wrongful discharge of a firearm.

Failing to render aid and secure the scene.

The facts that support the allegations of failing to render aid and secure the scene are different as to Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso, which is why I have come to different conclusions as to each officer.

First, as to Sergeant Liakopoulos, I find that the Superintendent has met his burden to overcome the recommendation because the undisputed facts establish that Sergeant Liakopoulos had no time to either render aid or secure the scene. In fact, Sergeant Liakopoulos chased [A.A.]

Nos. 24 RR 08-09
Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso
Request for Review and Opinion

after [A.A.] ran away with a loaded gun, after having fired a shot at the officers. When a witness told Sergeant Liakopoulos that [A.A.] had doubled-back in the direction of the original scene as Sergeant Liakopoulos chased him, Sergeant Liakopoulos returned to the original scene to warn his partner. When Sergeant Liakopoulos returned to the original scene, he did what was necessary to protect himself – he quickly went to the trunk of the officers' vehicle to obtain a bulletproof vest, believing that [A.A.] still posed a threat. There was no time to secure the scene because Sergeant Liakopoulos was actively attempting to protect himself and his partner from [A.A.], who had already fired at the officers. And upon Sergeant Liakopoulos's return, an individual with a medical background asked if they could render aid to Medina. Sergeant Liakopoulos agreed and the individual in fact rendered aid. Liakopoulos had no opportunity to render aid to Medina prior to that moment and was under no obligation to independently render aid when a qualified individual was already doing so.

Officer Reynoso, on the other hand, played a different role than Sergeant Liakopoulos. When [A.A.] fled (and Sergeant Liakopoulos followed), Officer Reynoso remained at the original scene, where Medina lay on the ground after having been shot. Despite remaining at the original scene, Officer Reynoso did not render aid to Medina and it is not clear based on the record why he did not. The record is also not clear as to what actions Officer Reynoso took to secure the scene or whether any such actions would have been practical given the circumstances.

Due to the lack of record evidence on these points, it is my opinion that the Superintendent has failed to meet his burden of overcoming the Chief Administrator's recommendation regarding Allegation Nos. 3 and 4 as to Officer Reynoso. That is not to say that the full Board may not find for Officer Reynoso on these allegations after a hearing. I am merely finding that, based on the evidence before me and the heightened standard of review applicable

Nos. 24 RR 08-09
Sergeant Liakopoulos and Officer Reynoso
Request for Review and Opinion

to disagreement cases, I cannot find that the Superintendent met his burden of overcoming the Chief Administrator's recommendation.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 2-78-130(a)(iii) of the Municipal Code of Chicago: (1) the Superintendent's response shall be implemented as to Sergeant Liakopoulos; (2) the Superintendent's response regarding Allegation Nos. 1 and 2 (discharging a firearm) shall be implemented as to Officer Reynoso; and (3) the Chief Administrator's recommendation regarding Allegation Nos. 3 and 4 (failing to render aid and secure the scene) shall be deemed accepted by the Superintendent as to Officer Reynoso.

Because the Chief Administrator's recommendation that Officer Reynoso be discharged from the Chicago Police Department was based on sustaining all four allegations, it appears that the appropriate next steps are for the Chief Administrator to issue a new recommendation for discipline based only on sustaining Allegation Nos. 3 and 4 (failing to render aid and secure the scene), and for the Superintendent to then respond to the Chief Administrator's new recommendation.

DATED AT CHICAGO, COUNTY OF COOK, STATE OF ILLINOIS, THIS 27th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2025.

/s/ STEVEN BLOCK
Member
Police Board

Attested by:

/s/ MAX A. CAPRONI
Executive Director
Police Board