



CITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

20
26

Recommendation to Reopen Chicago Police Department Disciplinary Investigation

CPD Log #2024-0008294

OIG Case #C2026-0000000072

June 25, 2026

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Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC) § 2-56-230(c)(ii), the Public Safety section of the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducts reviews of individual closed disciplinary investigations conducted by the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) and the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA). Based on those reviews, OIG may make a recommendation to reopen the investigation to address a deficiency materially affecting its outcome.¹

COPA investigated an allegation that CPD Officer Vanessa Wojciechowski, Star #17901, improperly handcuffed the reporting party. COPA sustained the allegation and recommended a suspension of one to ten days.

During its review, OIG observed that COPA questioned Officer Wojciechowski's credibility related to their recollection of the incident compared to Body Worn Camera (BWC) footage. COPA stated that Officer Wojciechowski's statements were inconsistent with the BWC footage. However, COPA did not conduct an analysis to determine whether the statements constituted a violation of CPD's Rule 14 prohibiting false reports.

OIG recommended that COPA reopen the investigation to conduct a Rule 14 analysis of the statements COPA found inconsistent with the available evidence.

In response to OIG's recommendation, COPA decline to reopen the investigation. COPA stated it had already recommended discipline for the accused CPD member related to the allegation of improper handcuffing, and that it had no evidence that the member intended to mislead or fabricate their account.

OIG's letter to COPA containing its recommendations is attached at Appendix A. COPA's response is attached at Appendix B.

¹ Once BIA or COPA has responded to an OIG recommendation to reopen an investigation, and once the underlying investigation has reached a final disciplinary decision, OIG's recommendation letters and the agencies' responses will be published on OIG's website. In these procedural postures, OIG's recommendations to reopen and the agencies' responses have been available and, from time to time, released pursuant to MCC § 2-56-250 and the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. These recommendations to reopen, issued pursuant to MCC § 2-56-230(c), are separate from OIG's own confidential investigative work, which is governed by the confidentiality provisions set out in MCC § 2-56-110.

Appendix A | OIG Letter



Deborah Witzburg | Inspector General
City of Chicago
Office of Inspector General
231 South LaSalle Street, 12th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: (773) 478-7799

Via Electronic Mail

April 3, 2026

LAKENYA WHITE
CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR
CIVILIAN OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY
1615 WEST CHICAGO AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60622

Re: Log #2024-0008294

Dear Chief Administrator White:

Pursuant to § 2-56-230(c)(ii) of the Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC), the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) Public Safety section has conducted a preliminary review of the investigation conducted by the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) in Log #2024-0008294. OIG recommends that the investigation be reopened to conduct an analysis of whether Rule 14, the Chicago Police Department (CPD) rule prohibiting false reports, was violated. Log #2024-0008294 is currently in a Command Channel Review status.

Log #2024-0008294 concerns allegations that Chicago Police Department (CPD) Officer Vanessa Wojciechowski, Star #17901, improperly handcuffed the reporting party. COPA sustained the allegation of improper handcuffing and recommended a suspension of one to 10 days.

On November 6, 2024, Officers Wojciechowski and Zuzanna Nowak, Star # 3813, conducted a traffic stop of the reporting party for disobeying a stop sign. Officers Wojciechowski and Nowak did not activate their squad car's emergency equipment to signal to the reporting party that they were conducting a traffic stop. OIG reviewed body worn camera (BWC) footage of Officer Wojciechowski. At the 2:00 mark, Officer Wojciechowski exits the squad car and approaches the reporting party who is standing just outside of their vehicle.¹ The BWC video does not show the reporting party walk away from their vehicle or approach Officer Wojciechowski. Officer Wojciechowski tells the reporting party that they cannot exit their vehicle during a traffic stop and then immediately grabs onto the reporting party's arm and begins to place them in handcuffs. The reporting party protested the legitimacy of the traffic stop but ultimately complies with the officers' commands.²

¹ The complainant had parked outside of their grandmother's residence when officers initiated the traffic stop.

² Attachment 5.

In its Final Summary Report (FSR), COPA questioned Officer Wojciechowski's credibility when it stated "COPA allowed [Officer Wojciechowski] to view [their] BWC pertaining to this incident. Officer Wojciechowski recalled the incident and provided [their] account of what happened, which was inconsistent with the BWC. Officer Wojciechowski claimed that [the reporting party] was dangerous because of the way [the reporting party] approached [them]. However, the BWC showed that [the reporting party] exited [their] vehicle before Officer Wojciechowski informed [them] it was a traffic stop. [The reporting party] stood in place, with [their] hands raised and visible. This was contrary to Officer Wojciechowski's assertion that [the reporting party] approached [them]. In fact, Officer Wojciechowski approached [the reporting party] to conduct the traffic stop and almost immediately began handcuffing [the reporting party]."³

Although COPA acknowledged Officer Wojciechowski's statements were inconsistent with BWC video, and questioned Officer Wojciechowski's credibility, COPA did not conduct a Rule 14 analysis to determine whether Officer Wojciechowski's statements violated that rule.

Based on OIG's preliminary review, and without taking any position on any other aspect of the investigation or its findings, OIG recommends that COPA reopen this investigation to conduct a Rule 14 analysis of statements COPA finds inconsistent with the available evidence.

Please contact Chief Investigative Analyst LaDonna Candia-Flanagan at lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org or (773) 478-5614 with any questions. Please send your response to this recommendation within the time allowed by MCC § 2-56-245. OIG will consider a failure to respond in the time permitted by ordinance to be a declination of our recommendation. OIG looks forward to COPA's response, and recommends that COPA incorporate this letter and its response into the electronic case file to provide for a complete record.

Respectfully,



Tobara Richardson
Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety
Office of Inspector General

cc: Deborah Witzburg, Inspector General, OIG
Samuel Chae, Associate General Counsel for Public Safety, OIG
LaDonna Candia-Flanagan, Chief Investigative Analyst for Public Safety, OIG
Angela Snell, Acting General Counsel, COPA
Timothy L. Moore, Chief, Bureau of Internal Affairs, CPD

³ Attachment 65.

Appendix B | Department Response



May 28, 2026

Tobara Richardson
Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety
Office of Inspector General
740 North Sedgwick Street, Suite 200
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Via Electronic Mail

Re: Re-Open Recommendation Log No. 2024-0008294

Dear Deputy Inspector General Richardson:

I am in receipt of your April 3, 2026 letter recommending that COPA re-open and conduct additional investigation in Log No. 2024-0008294. We understand the Office of the Inspector General - Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety (PSIG) recommends re-opening this case to investigate additional potential Rule 14 allegations. For the reasons stated below, COPA does not concur with PSIG's recommendation to re-open.

First, COPA has already recommended discipline for Police Officer Vanessa Wojciechowski¹ based on the finding that they unlawfully handcuffed the complainant. COPA found the objective evidence did not support the officer's belief that the complainant was aggressive before being handcuffed. PSIG has not identified any evidence to suggest or establish that PO Wojciechowski willfully made false statements.² Rather, Officer Wojciechowski was consistent in their statement to COPA that they believed that the complainant behaved aggressively. While COPA finds PO Wojciechowski's subjective beliefs unreasonable under the facts of this case, COPA has no evidence that the officer intended to mislead or to fabricate their account.

Under COPA's ordinance, the Chief Administrator may, in their discretion, re-open any closed investigation upon PSIG's recommendation.³ Here, I cannot find an appropriate basis to re-open this investigation. I appreciate your continued diligent and careful review of closed COPA investigations.

[Remainder of page left intentionally blank]

¹ Star #17091.

² To establish a Rule 14 violation, COPA would need to prove: (1) that a false statement was made, (2) that it was made willfully, and (3) that it was made about a fact that was material to the investigation. *See Agreement between City of Chicago Department of Police and Chicago John Dineen Lodge No. 7 §6.1(M).*

³ MCC § 2-78-120(x)(iii).

Page 2 of 2
May 28, 2026
Ms. Tobar Richardson

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LaKenya White". The signature is stylized with a large initial "L" and a cursive "W".

LaKenya White
Chief Administrator
Civilian Office of Police Accountability

cc:

Samuel Chae (OIG)
LaDonna Candia-Flanagan (OIG)
Timothy Moore (CPD)
Angie Snell (COPA)



LaDonna Candia-Flanagan

Chief Investigative Analyst for Public Safety

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For further information about this report, please contact the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, 231 S. LaSalle Street, 12th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604, or visit our website at igchicago.org.

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