

# **CITY OF SPOKANE USE OF FORCE COMMISSION**

**October 15, 2013**

**Mayor David A. Condon  
City of Spokane  
Spokane City Hall  
808 West Spokane Falls Boulevard  
Spokane, Washington 99201**

Dear Mayor Condon:

On August 21, 2013, the City of Spokane Use of Force Commission received a six month update from Spokane Police Department (SPD) Chief of Police Frank Straub and other city employees on the progress that has been made in implementing the twenty-six recommendations contained within the Commission's final report. We are very impressed with the progress that has been made in responding to our recommendations. It is clear that you and Chief Straub are committed to improving the police department's use of force policies and practices, and that you both value increased transparency and public engagement on this critically important issue.

With the exception of recommendation #3 (Rewrite the SPD Mission Statement), the City's response to our recommendations remains a work in progress. This is understandable given the complexity of the reforms under consideration. For the most part, the Commission will reserve commenting on the evolution of specific recommendations until such time as the on-going efforts have had a chance to mature. However, the Commission does wish to specifically comment on a few recommendations:

1. Recommendation #1 – *Conduct a culture audit of the SPD*. The six month report describes a great deal of activity that can generally be placed under the heading of efforts undertaken to improve the SPD's organizational culture. The Commission commends Chief Straub and his leadership team for pursuing all of these worthwhile activities. Nevertheless, the Commission does not consider those to be a substitute for the culture audit called for by this recommendation.
2. Recommendation #2 – *Bring greater transparency to the City's negotiations with the Spokane Police Guild and the Spokane Police Lieutenants and Captains Association*. City Attorney Isserlis explained at the August 21 meeting that the current round of negotiations with the Spokane Police Guild are governed by a memorandum of understanding entered into between the relevant parties that

prohibits the type of transparency called for in this recommendation. It is the Commission's hope that the City's ability to share information with the public about future negotiations with the Guild or the Lieutenants and Captains Association will not be hampered by such agreements.

3. Recommendations #20, 21a, and 21b – *Investing the Office of the Police Ombudsman with the authority and ability to conduct thorough independent investigations*. The Commission reiterates its position that an empowered and independent Spokane Office of Police Ombudsman would enhance trust between the SPD and the citizens it serves, provide support to conscientious and competent police officers, and improve the operations of the SPD.

We continue to appreciate the opportunity to serve the City of Spokane and its citizens as members of the Use of Force Commission. We look forward to marking the continued progress of your administration in implementing our recommendations for improvement.

Sincerely,

Earl F. Martin  
Chair

William D. Hyslop  
Vice Chair

Gerry Alexander  
Member

Ivan Bush  
Member

Susan Hammond  
Member