

Yonkers Police Department and U.S. Department of Justice Sign Agreement Closing Investigation Into Alleged Police Practices

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YONKERS, NY – November 14, 2016 – Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano today announced the Yonkers Police Department (YPD) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) have signed an agreement regarding a federal investigation concerning alleged improper police practices by the Yonkers Police Department. In the agreement, signed by Mayor Spano and U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara, the Department of Justice states there is no sufficient evidence of a pattern of race-biased policing by the Yonkers Police Department.

“Today’s settlement is the result of many years of negotiations between the City and our Department of Justice -- exhibiting cooperation, not confrontation,” said **Mayor Spano**. “As a result, the federal government is not imposing a federal monitor, consent decree, nor any punitive or financial measures against the city. Our Yonkers Police Department continues to implement best policing practices that build improved relationships with our community.”

Since the initial complaints were made regarding the Yonkers Police, the department has made considerable strides in community policing initiatives, including the implementation of several programs that bridge the gap between the police and the community. Programs like the Youth Police Initiative bring patrol officers and at-risk young people together to work out conflicts in advance. Other services such as the Police Explorer Program, the Youth Police Academy and the Youth Police Coalition also have proven to be highly effective in connecting residents with local police officers.

The implementation of new police training practices and community policing initiatives has resulted in the Yonkers Police Department experiencing a 76% decrease in excessive force complaints and a 44% decrease in citizen complaints since 2011.

“The Yonkers Police Department is completely supportive of constitutional police practices,” noted **Yonkers Police Commissioner Charles Gardner**. “The provisions of this mutual agreement represent the values we already hold and have sought to implement over the years. We will continue to work collaboratively with the DOJ on the implementation of the agreement.”

The final signed agreement includes the following:

- There is no court-filing, assigned judge, injunction or court monitor.
- The agreement is not an admission of wrongdoing
- No aspect of the YPD's managerial discretion is impaired. The Commissioner and his staff have full authority to run the YPD without outside interference.
- If a court or other agency determines that the agreement conflicts with a union contract, the union contract shall control.
- To adopt use of force policies and procedures that ensure that significant uses of force are reported and reviewed by the chain of command or Internal Affairs.
- Procedures for proper implementation of stop-and-search activities will be put in place with reporting requirements. Traffic stops are excluded from the agreement (unless coupled with a stop for a reason other than traffic enforcement).
- Provisions for an enhanced computerized data or risk management system require YPD to collect more data to identify areas for potential improvement.
- All YPD personnel must have enhanced training including at least 32 hours per year of special training away from their normal duties.
- There will be no independent monitor paid for by the City. DOJ will hire its own consultant to periodically review and report to DOJ on YPD's progress toward compliance.
- The agreement must be in place for at least two years. It may be dissolved after two years if the YPD has been in compliance with all substantive provisions for at least 12 months.

In August 2007, the Department of Justice opened the investigation regarding alleged pattern of improper police practices based on a series of complaints received by the DOJ in 2006-2007. In April 2012, the Department of Justice informed the City of Yonkers that the investigation was complete. From September 2012 until June 2016, the City of Yonkers and the DOJ engaged in a negotiation to resolve the matter, resulting in the final agreement signed today.

Mayor Spano added, "We thank the federal government and our local U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara for working with us in resolving this matter. I especially thank Yonkers Police Commissioner Gardner for implementing best police practices that have proven to make great strides in improving relationships with our community."