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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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New Use of Force Standard Operating Procedure Reflects Community Desires

Includes items from Eight Can't Wait police practice reform campaign

At yesterday's (Thursday, December 10) meeting of the Fire and Police Commission, the Commission voted to approve a new Use of Force Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) within the Milwaukee Police Department that implements many items of police reform advocated for by the community. Notably, the new SOP brings Milwaukee in line with the national Eight Can't Wait policing reform campaign. Earlier this year, **Common Council President Cavalier Johnson** sponsored file #200320 urging the Fire and Police Commission to adopt de-escalation and restraint policies for the police department in alignment with the Eight Can't Wait campaign.

"I want to thank the Fire and Police Commission and the Milwaukee Police Department for taking this necessary action as we work to institute meaningful police reform in our community, and I want to thank the residents who have continued to make their voices heard on this issue," said President Johnson. "While we still have much work to do, the new standard operating procedure and its alignment with the Eight Can't Wait campaign place an enhanced emphasis on de-escalation techniques which is a positive step forward."

In alignment with Eight Can't Wait the new SOP includes: Banning chokeholds and other tactics that restrict oxygen flow on suspects unless caught in a life-or-death situation; requiring de-escalation techniques when feasible and outlining appropriate techniques; banning shooting at a moving vehicle, except in life-preserving circumstances; and enhancing reporting by requiring a use of force report be submitted if an officer points a firearm at an individual, even if not fired.

-More-

Use of Force SOP/ADD ONE

Additional aspects of the new SOP are a ban on the use of oleoresin capsicum (pepper spray) on peaceful demonstrations, as well as an “I can’t breathe” provision. Should a person use the statement “I can’t breathe” or something similar, the officer shall immediately evaluate the situation and determine if an alternative restraint or technique can be safely and effectively utilized that will allow the person to breathe properly without compromising officer safety. The officer shall then request medical aid as soon as reasonably possible and place the individual on their side or in a sitting position to prevent injury and assess the individual’s physical condition.

“Many of the items included in the new SOP were advocated for by members of the Council, and I want to thank my colleagues for their tireless work on this front. Addressing police reform is a team effort and I look forward to continued collaboration on this issue,” stated President Johnson. “I’d also like to commend the Community Collaborative Commission for their commitment toward tackling police reform and community oriented policing in particular.”

Previous files adopted by the Common Council included in the new SOP are: #200267, a resolution urging the Fire and Police Commission to adopt a rule requiring police officers to file a report every time they draw a gun, mace, or stun gun on duty, introduced by **Alderman Khalif J. Rainey**; file # 200215, a resolution urging the Fire and Police Commission to adopt a policy addressing the "I can't breathe" plea by an individual who is under police custody, introduced by **Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II**; and **Alderman JoCasta Zamarripa** introduced file #200316, a substitute resolution urging the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners to adopt standard operating procedures prohibiting certain types of restraints and holds such as ‘chokeholds’ and ‘strangleholds’.

The Fire and Police Commission will continue to discuss a revised Community Oriented Policing SOP.