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## ESSEX POLICE DEPARTMENT

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### PRESS RELEASE UPDATE

DATE: 07/21/2021  
Incident no: 21ES004127

On July 13, 2021 Essex Police were called to 187 Pearl Street in Essex Junction for the report of a disturbance. As indicated in a previous press release, police found that multiple subjects were involved and statements given about several assaults that occurred prior to police arrival. As a result of that, Brandon Williams was that night issued a citation for Aggravated Assault with no others being charged. Video evidence obtained the next day from Mr. Williams also shows that one of those involved used a racial slur directed at Mr. Williams indicating a racially motivated component to her actions.

After an internal review of the incident, the Essex Police Department now states that the issuance of the citation to Mr. Williams should not have occurred until more facts of the case had been gathered and the case reviewed by the State's Attorney. For this, we apologize to Mr. Williams. We are now taking the following steps:

- The citation that was issued to Mr. Williams is being rescinded. Our review indicates that probable cause did exist for his arrest at that time, however, we believe waiting until a more thorough review of the incident could be done was more appropriate. We are rescinding the citation to allow that to occur.
- The case has been reassigned to an uninvolved supervisor to conduct a review of the statements and video evidence, re-interview those involved, and then submit a case for review to the Chittenden State's Attorney. The State's Attorney will determine the appropriate charges for all involved, to include the enhancement of a hate crime. Reassignment of the case is being done to minimize concerns of responding officers conducting this subsequent review. Instead of issuing charges on our own, we are taking this course due to the need for an independent review and transparency.
- We are assisting the Vermont Attorney General's Office Hate Crimes unit in a review of this case as well.
- With the cooperation of Tabitha Moore (former President of the Rutland Branch of the NAACP and State Director), whom we have been consulting with this past year, we will be conducting further training with all officers, to ensure that we are considering all aspects of a case, not just probable cause, before the determination of charges when there are many complicating factors.

The Essex Police Department has been working with community members this past year in an effort to better serve everyone in our community, especially those most impacted by racism and inequity. We have engaged our public in conversation and efforts like never before and we realize that incidents such as this indicate we have more work to do. We further agree that there is no room for hate of any kind in this community and we will do whatever it takes to root that out. Finally, we recognize the concern this has created in the BIPOC community, and the Essex Community at large and we want to reassure that we are committed to our core values of Courage, Integrity, Respect, and the vision we have co-created with the Essex Community over the past seven months.

Issued By: Ron Hoague, Chief of Police