

Wilkes-Barre City Police Benevolent Association

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Press Release:

The Wilkes-Barre Police Benevolent Association's (PBA) stance on the matter involving Officer Duffy and Darlene Duggins-Magdalinski is simple. Upon completion of the internal investigation process, the PBA has no objection to the release of the Body Worn Camera (BWC) footage by the City to dispel false accusations of racial profiling and lack of probable cause by Officer Duffy. The PBA welcomed the issuance of bodycams for officers and continues to support their use. Should the footage of this incident be made public, it will show Darlene Duggins-Magdalinski attempted to use her position as Chairperson of the Police Advisory Committee (PAC) to alter the outcome of a police investigation.

The Mayor, Chief Coffay, and PBA leadership viewed the BWC footage of the incident. The PBA has no doubt the complaints and allegations against Officer Duffy, a highly decorated officer who has been recognized numerous times for his passion and emphasis on community policing, are completely baseless. This speaks to the nature of the footage itself. Bodycam footage is a clear and unbiased view of the incident, it captures the audio and video accounts of police encounters. Duggins-Magdalinski claims racial profiling and lack of probable cause, both of which are clearly discredited in the BWC footage of the incident. In fact, the BWC footage highlights the professionalism, courtesy, and discretion exercised by Officer Duffy while faced with an irate, threatening, and disrespectful Duggins-Magdalinski.

Darlene Duggins-Magdalinski, a Hanover Twp. resident, attempted to use her position on the PAC and supposed relationships with Mayor Brown, Chief Coffay, and other elected officials to change the disposition of the traffic stop, and when her attempts were unsuccessful, Duggins-Magdalinski resorted to profanity and threatening Officer Duffy's professional credibility and career. This is the exact conduct the PAC is supposed to discourage and prevent.

The PBA requests an investigation into the conduct of Duggins-Magdalinski, to include her past police contacts and prior attempts to use her position on the PAC and claimed relationships with political figures to secure legal advantage and credibility, and calls for her immediate removal for good cause shown as outlined in Section II of the PAC guidelines. Additionally, we call for her removal as she is in clear violation of PAC guidelines by failing to meet the residency requirements as outlined in Section I of the PAC guidelines.

https://www.wilkes-barre.city/sites/g/files/vyhlf8381/f/uploads/police_advisory_committee_guidelines.pdf

Lastly, “activist” members of the PAC with hidden agendas degrades the integrity of the committee and tarnishes the transparency the PAC is attempting to promote. Once the investigation is complete, the PBA knows Officer Duffy will be exonerated. Additionally, after review of the footage in question, the PBA is confident it will be apparent why Duggins-Magdalinski has no business being part of a committee whose purpose is to improve the relationship between the police and the community we serve.

Joseph Homza, President
Police Benevolent Association