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Oakland Police Department reforms reach new level of success according to Monitor's report

OAKLAND – The Oakland Police Department has reached its highest level of compliance yet in a decade-old reform effort, according to a new report by the federal court official overseeing the department's efforts.

The report was released Monday by Chief Robert Warshaw, who serves as both Monitor and Compliance Director for Judge Thelton Henderson and oversees OPD's court-ordered reform efforts. Warshaw wrote that OPD has reached "the highest number of Tasks in compliance since the beginning of our tenure," and he observed progress on several fronts under OPD Chief Sean Whent's command.

Other highlights of the report include:

On Mayor Jean Quan's appointment of Whent as permanent Chief: "Mayor Quan was deliberate in the selection process, and she has demonstrated her commitment to the collective success and individual development of Chief Whent and the members of his Executive Team. In addition, new Interim City Administrator Henry Gardner shows acute sensitivity to issues of police reform in Oakland, and I look forward to working closely with him."

On Chief Whent and his command staff: "They work well together. Under their leadership, the Department has made many strides, not all directly related to the NSA but important to list here. Chief Whent modified the Department's organizational structure and plans to create a new Research and Planning Section for the Department. Civilians are now handling complaint intake at IAD, and that appears to be progressing smoothly; eventually, there will be five persons working in that capacity. The Department is planning to overhaul its long-term strategic plan and establish a new policy management system. Although at least partly attributable to changes in classifications, citizen complaints and uses of force have decreased significantly."

On the growth of the police force: "Forty-seven police officers recently graduated from the Academy and are currently in field training, 36 new officers are expected to graduate in July, 55 new officers are expected to graduate in October, and an additional 15 officers will join OPD from the Alameda County Sheriff's Office Academy in the next few months."

Mayor Quan thanked everyone involved in the reform efforts for their continued dedication to improved constitutional policing in Oakland.

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“It’s no coincidence that our reform efforts are gaining steam while crime rates continue to drop,” Mayor Quan said. “These reforms have been a top priority of mine since I took office because police officers who have the shared trust and respect of the community are more effective at keeping our streets safe.”

Chief Whent thanked his command staff and all the hardworking men and women of the police department for their hard work.

“We are encouraged by the latest report released by the Compliance Director, and we recognize that we still have more work to do,” Chief Whent said. “We remain dedicated to achieving organizational excellence. We will continue to partner with all stakeholders as we move forward with this important work.”

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