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*Albany Community Police Review Board
c/o Government Law Center*

October 3, 2023

Chief Eric Hawkins
Albany Police Department
165 Henry Johnson Boulevard
Albany, New York 12210

RE: APD Discipline Matrix

Dear Chief Hawkins:

The CPRB is pleased to submit for your review and adoption of the Albany Police Department's first-ever Discipline Matrix. This Discipline Matrix culminates months-long multi-stakeholder collaborative partnerships and extensive public input and engagement. It was, in short, a momentous effort by everyone involved.

Background

As you know, Local Law J requires the CPRB to “establish a disciplinary matrix in conjunction with the Chief. Such a matrix shall include clearly delineated penalty levels with ranges of sanctions, which progressively increase based on the gravity of the misconduct and the number of prior sustained complaints.”

Local Law J mirrored what the CNA Group, consultants whom your Department and the City engaged, recommended in its “[Racial Bias Audit of the Albany, New York Police Department](#)” (December 2020). This report noted that a Discipline Matrix can “reduce disparities in the application of discipline, [...] improve transparency in the disciplinary process [and] support internal procedural justice in police agencies.” Accordingly, CNA recommended that APD “develop a discipline matrix to ensure disciplinary decisions are fair and equitable for all personnel.”

In January 2023, the CPRB designed, shared, and implemented a comprehensive project plan, which included several public meetings (in-person and recorded), and worked as part of a CPRB Discipline Matrix Standing Committee. The committee included APD leadership, community representatives, CPRB members, and, at times, APD union representatives.

Together, the CPRB Discipline Matrix Standing Committee researched and spoke with other jurisdictions (including Rochester, Baltimore, BART/Northern California, among others), reviewed studies and reports from academic and government institutions, and conducted two public surveys (in March at the start of the process, and September in response to a draft iteration) to develop this Discipline Matrix.

This process and research, obtained in part from the diverse perspectives of many different Albany stakeholders, provides the strong foundation for this Discipline Matrix. This proposed structure explains violation levels, addresses repeat violations under a progressive discipline system, and considers non-punitive options and education-based alternatives where appropriate.

REASONS TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE DISCIPLINE MATRIX

It is standard practice for law enforcement agencies to convey expectations around behavior, both on and off duty, to their officers. A Discipline Matrix - along with police policies - does this by outlining the consequences for different degrees of misconduct.

This Discipline Matrix ...

- Provides clearly defined and consistent guidelines for police officers
 - *Why this matters: Officers know and understand expectations and are assured of a fair and equitable process*

- Codifies consequences and outlines disciplinary ranges for sustained allegations of different types of misconduct
 - *Why this matters: Demonstrated transparency will bolster public trust in the system and work towards improving the relationship between law enforcement and the community*

The CPRB is grateful to all those involved and appreciates the civility and leadership demonstrated during the project.

We look forward to a productive discussion about this draft and supporting you in adopting a Discipline Matrix that offers clear and consistent guidelines to the officers serving the City of Albany and its communities.

Respectfully yours,



Nairobi Vives, Chair
Community Police Review Board