



PRESS RELEASE

Response to Charges Issued against Officer involved in Fatal Traffic Accident

The Warren Police Department would like provide the following response regarding charges issued by the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office against the officer involved in the fatal traffic accident on 09/30/2024.

The traffic accident on 09/30/2024 at Schoenherr near Prospect was a tragedy for all involved. Two police officers sustained serious injuries and the lives of two young men were lost. The driver of the police vehicle, Officer James Burke, has been with our department for nearly three years and served honorably at another law enforcement agency for five years prior to joining our Department. He comes from a law enforcement family and has an impeccable record of public service with multiple public service awards and accolades, including a 2024 Medal of Valor for heroism in the line of duty. Officer Burke had no history of problematic driving or any prior incidents of concern before this tragic accident. Still, the seriousness of this accident involving a police officer necessitated an independent review by the Macomb County Sheriff's Office.

Today, the Warren Police Department was made aware that the Macomb County Sheriff's Office had completed their independent investigation into this tragic accident and requested a review of the investigation be conducted by the Macomb County Prosecutor's Office. We were informed the Prosecutor's Office decided to charge Officer Burke with two counts of manslaughter with a motor vehicle, one count of moving violation causing serious impairment of a bodily function, and one count of willful neglect of duty by a public official. Of course, this officer is entitled to due process and is presumed innocent until proven guilty. That being said, police officers are subject to the same criminal code as the citizens we serve and, as such, the Warren Police Department acknowledges the Prosecutor's decision.

Officer Burke has been on administrative leave since the date of this motor vehicle accident. Now that the criminal investigation has concluded, the internal investigation will examine this incident looking for Officer Burke's compliance with Warren Police Policies and Procedures. As required by the collective bargaining agreement, he will be given a due process hearing to determine the future of his employment with the Warren Police Department after the internal investigation is concluded. He will not return to work from his administrative leave before that hearing occurs.

The passenger officer was not charged with a crime. This officer has also been on administrative leave while the Sheriff's Office investigation was ongoing. Given today's update, the passenger officer will be returned to work once he fully recovers from the serious injuries he suffered in this accident.

Again, the Warren Police Department recognizes the gravity of this tragic incident and extends our deepest sympathies to the victims' family and friends. We also continue to pray for the full recovery of our injured officers. Despite this difficult time, the men and women of this Department remain dedicated to serving our community with the utmost integrity and professionalism. The Department is committed to learning from this incident and moving forward towards our never-ending goal of excellence in law enforcement and public service.

**For further information, please contact Warren Police
Commissioner Charles Rushton @586-574-4803 or 586-823-
9845**