

Dispatch report provides more details on fatal - Newport Daily News, The (RI) - September 10, 2018

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PAWTUCKET — A passing motorist early Friday called 911 when she saw a man bend down to tie his sneaker — exposing a gun on his belt.

The man with the gun was 28-year-old **DaShawn Cole**, according to Pawtucket police. That call to dispatch at 6:10 a.m. led to Cole's shooting death after an encounter with three police officers.

Pawtucket Police Chief Tina Goncalves said little Friday about what happened, except that three officers confronted Cole, who she said then assaulted one of the officers with the gun. She did not say whether Cole fired the weapon.

A dispatch log released Monday afternoon by the mayor's office after questions from The Journal reveals more information about what happened and the officers who responded.

According to the log, the caller was near the intersection of Central Avenue and Makin Street when she saw the man in a gray polo shirt and khaki pants walking toward a nearby Pizza Hut. The caller was "extremely reluctant" to give her phone number, which police got from 911, although she was told it was necessary "due to the seriousness of the call."

Officers Taylor E. Fay, Ana C. Vertentes, and Rui J. Silva were the first to arrive at 6:14 a.m., just four minutes after the call, according to the dispatch log. Minutes later, more officers arrived: Dylan Salvatore, Dianne L. Rittman-McLaughlin, William P. Briggs and Michael A. Haberek.

At 6:18 a.m., police radioed "shots fired" and called for a rescue. The log doesn't state who fired the shots.

Sgt. Timothy Graham, a department spokesman, said Saturday that the officers tried to save Cole's life. "They performed CPR and also used a med kit to try to stem the bleeding until rescue arrived," he said in an email. "It is a department policy to provide care as needed as soon as is practical."

Three officers are on administrative leave, pending an investigation by the police, state police and attorney general's office, as is customary in officer-involved shootings. A spokesman for Mayor Donald Grebien said more information about the shooting may be released Monday.

The dispatch log is supposed to include all calls received by the police department. However, the log from Friday morning sent to The Journal from the clerk's office did not include any mention of the firearms call and officer-involved shooting. Instead, there was a gap in time from 1:29 a.m. to 6:39 a.m.

After questions from The Journal, the mayor's office sent the log that included the incident.

This followed calls Monday morning from the Rhode Island chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union for Pawtucket police to release more information about the fatal shooting.

The ACLU said "very basic information about this tragic incident remains undisclosed," including the names of the officers involved, how many shots were fired, the threat faced by the police at the time and even whether the victim had fired any shots himself.

In recent instances, most departments in Rhode Island have moved swiftly to identify officers and give an explanation in officer-involved shootings. Providence police also made videos from officers' body cameras and highway surveillance public the day after a fatal shooting on Route 95 last fall.

Pawtucket police have varied in their response. While the department soon identified two officers who fatally shot a man with a gun in 2012, the Pawtucket police waited nearly a week — and after protests — to talk about an incident and identify an officer who shot and killed a man with a realistic-looking BB gun in 2016.

Since 2003, the Pawtucket police have had 10 officer-involved shootings, including seven that were fatal. All were determined to be justified.

The police haven't answered any questions about how they encountered Cole, who is from the Boston area and has a criminal record in Massachusetts, according to public records and published reports. Cole had been arrested four times on gun charges and served time in state prison in Massachusetts.

The Pawtucket police haven't answered questions about the type of gun they said Cole was carrying, how it came into his possession, or what he did when encountered by the officers.

In a statement Monday, the ACLU said the lack of information in Friday's shooting "remains striking and totally unacceptable," particularly in contrast to the disclosure of information when serious civilian-upon-civilian crimes occur.

The ACLU said that according to published accounts, there have been 14 incidents of deadly police shootings in Rhode Island since 2006. Of those 14 deaths, seven have been at the hands of Pawtucket police.

While saying it was making no judgment as to the police officer's actions Friday, the ACLU called on the state attorney general and the Pawtucket police chief "to conduct a thorough review of the Pawtucket Police Department's training and practices to determine the causes behind this disconcerting track record."

Graham had no comment on the ACLU's call for an investigation on the number of police-involved shootings.

With reports from staff writer Tom Mooney

