

September 24, 2019

IIU concludes investigation into fatal WPS officer-involved shooting

The Independent Investigation Unit (IIU) has concluded its investigation into the death of a 26-year-old man following an officer-involved shooting on Sherbrook Street earlier this year. It has concluded no charges should be laid against any of the three officers who fired their weapons.

On the evening of January 11, 2019, members of the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) were on the lookout for a man wanted in connection with a domestic assault. When they encountered the suspect, and noted he was acting suspiciously, they attempted to stop and question him.

The man fled and an officer followed on foot while requesting back-up and advising that the man was armed with a hatchet. Other units responded quickly. When the man entered a vacant lot on Sherbrook just south of Sargent and threatened police with the hatchet, two officers deployed their conductive energy weapons (Tasers) but to no effect. The man then drew his arm back to throw the hatchet and three officers discharged their firearms. The man was subsequently taken to hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries and died the next day.

In addition to reviewing reports from the three subject officers, IIU investigators interviewed eight witness officers and seven civilian witnesses. They were also aided in their investigation by WPS dispatch recordings; cell phone video from witnesses; security video from an apartment block on Sherbrook Street that showed the man holding an axe; and drug analysis that detected methamphetamine and amphetamine in the man's blood.

In his report on the investigation, IIU civilian director Zane Tessler found the use of lethal force by the three officers was justified and unavoidable, and that their decision to shoot the man was necessary to prevent death or injury to themselves or other officers in the vicinity.

The civilian director's complete report is available online at www.iumanitoba.ca. The details of this investigation were first announced on January 12, 2019.

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Information on the IIU can be found at www.iumanitoba.ca or at www.twitter.com/IIUManitoba