

City of Davis

Independent Police Auditor Report:

Complaint Regarding Booking Process at DPD
Station

March 2025

Independent Police Auditor
Michael Gennaco
Stephen Connolly

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Factual Background

The complainant alleged in an email that her civil rights had been violated when she arrived at the Davis Police Department's station to be booked and was not timely processed. The complainant stated that DPD had violated her civil rights by failing to accommodate a disabled person.

The complaint arose from a criminal case in which the complainant was alleged to have violated a domestic violence protective order. DPD's investigative report was forwarded to the Yolo County District Attorney's Office for review and subsequently charges were filed against the complainant. As part of the criminal court process, the complainant received a letter from the District Attorney advising her to report to the Davis Police Department so that she could be booked.

Upon receipt of the letter, the complainant contacted a second level supervisor at DPD and asked to schedule an appointment for when she could be booked. The supervisor advised the complainant that it was not possible to schedule an appointment. The complainant then traveled by bus for the sixty-mile trip. Because DPD's lobby is currently closed to the public¹, the complainant was asked to wait outside. Eventually, the complainant left and returned later to complete the booking.

¹ During the COVID pandemic, DPD's police station lobby was closed to the public and has, to date, not reopened. As indicated in the investigative report, the public is provided access upon request to the lobby's restrooms and water fountain.

DPD Investigation

Upon receipt of the complaint, a DPD investigator contacted the complainant who advised that she did not wish to pursue the complaint. Nonetheless and to its credit, DPD reviewed all materials relating to the incident and confirmed that the complainant had, in fact, traveled to the station to be booked. A report documenting the incident indicated that when the complainant arrived, she was advised there would be a delay before she could be booked. The report further indicated that after waiting 90 minutes, the complainant said she would not wait any longer, asked for water, was let into the lobby to use the drinking fountains, and then left.

DPD concluded that there it had no duty to accommodate the complainant as she suggested and that her allegations of violations of civil rights was frivolous.

IPA Analysis

We reviewed the relevant materials and agree that DPD committed no violations of the complainant's civil rights. However, the better outcome may have been to consider the concern as a "service complaint" about a protocol that could perhaps benefit from refinement.

If one considers this matter from the complainant's perspective, her frustration – if not the specific allegations that she produced in response to it – seems to us to be understandable. She received a letter from the prosecuting authority instructing her to go to Davis PD to be booked on a criminal charge. She then contacted DPD so that she could arrange a time to be booked. She spoke to a supervisor, who told her DPD could not accommodate such an appointment request. The complainant then travels by bus over sixty miles to the station, only to be advised to wait outside until someone is available to book her. After a 90-minute wait with no assistance, the complainant then leaves the station.

In the same way that an overly long response to a call for service would deserve a certain level of scrutiny and explanation, this woman's experience of attempting to comply with an unwelcome obligation deserved an assessment that went beyond her groundless claims of "false imprisonment" and "cruel and unusual punishment." Even assuming a reasonable explanation for why no personnel were available to book the complainant, the protocol itself seems ripe for review. Perhaps, for example, the supervisor she spoke with could at least have provided her with some suggestions for achieving better results, especially in light of her travel and her transportation limitations.

Ideally, a complaint should be considered as an opportunity for a police agency to review the incident holistically instead of within the more narrow parameters of a policy violation. In this case, such a perspective could have been used as an opportunity to improve responses so that more effective and timely service could be provided to similarly situated individuals. We respectfully suggest that DPD consider such complaints broadly and as an opportunity to improve service on a going forward basis.

RECOMMENDATION: In evaluating complaints, DPD should consider whether better service could have been provided and in appropriate circumstances adjust its protocols accordingly.



March 10, 2025

Re: Response to IPA Report – Booking Process at DPD Station, March 2025

Dear Michael Gennaco and Stephen Connolly,

I would like to thank you for your thorough audit and detailed review of the incident that led to a community member complaint about the level of service received from the Davis Police Department during the criminal booking process. I appreciate your time and expertise in analyzing the situation and identifying areas for improvement. I also agree that while there was no violation of law or policy, there is an opportunity to improve the booking process, specifically for individuals traveling from out of town. After carefully reviewing your findings, we acknowledge that there are aspects of Department processes that can be reviewed that may result in a more positive experience.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, we are taking steps to address the identified issues. We will be conducting a thorough review of our internal processes and employee training procedures to ensure that all community-facing interactions meet the standards we set for service excellence. More specifically, we will be implementing operational changes aimed at enhancing communication, scheduling, and availability of the public lobby. We will be offering scheduling services for those who are traveling from out of town during the booking process. We will also be looking into re-opening our lobby to the community. Additional safety and work plan changes, which are currently being reviewed, will need to be implemented.

The Department is quite proud of the dedicated service our members provide to the public each day, the *Davis Way*; however, we are always looking for ways to do better. We are confident that these operational improvements will not only help prevent similar incidents in the future but will also contribute to a more consistent and positive experience for both Department members and our community. We appreciate your analysis and feedback as we take this opportunity to work towards these goals.

If you require any additional information or have further suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out. We value your continued partnership and look forward to your insights as we work toward a better community experience.

Sincerely,

Todd Henry, Police Chief

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