

ACLU of Wisconsin: Responds to reports indicating that the Wauwatosa Police Department inflates public records information costs

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WAUWATOSA - The ACLU of Wisconsin today issued the following statement after it was [reported by the Wisconsin Examiner](#) Monday that a Wauwatosa Police Department email discovered via an open records request indicates that the department inflates the costs to the public for open records requests.

Molly Collins, Advocacy Director for the ACLU of Wisconsin, said:

“Charging the public outrageously high costs to request records about the police shooting of Jay Anderson is not only unlawful, but shows the gross disregard and lack of respect that the Wauwatosa Police Department continues to have for the community it is tasked with protecting and serving. Additionally, it appears that the Wauwatosa Police Department sought legal advice from a police union lawyer on a municipal law issue, like open records, when the city has a city attorney whose job is to advise departments on municipal law matters.”

“If the Wauwatosa Police Department considers these dishonest tactics as a

reasonable response to community requests for information from his office, it is a red flag that there are other less than honest approaches also being used at the Wauwatosa Police Department under his watch. The Wauwatosa Police Department will never earn the trust of the people if its officers are willing to deliberately suppress possible evidence of police violence.”

“The public deserves to know exactly what happened to Jay Anderson, and the measures taken by the Wauwatosa Police Department to keep information about his killing hidden from public view obstructs the search for the truth. We have a right to request more information from the police, whether they want us to or not. Attempting to prevent the details of potential police misconduct from coming to light is patently wrong, and jeopardizes the safety of all of us.”

The ACLU of Wisconsin is also awaiting open records requests it filed with the Wauwatosa Police Department on Oct. 22, 2020, for documents surrounding the protests in September and October, including documents relating to the seizure, search and disposition of cell phones from people arrested for curfew between Oct. 7-15; use of force incidents between Oct. 7-15; Wauwatosa Police Department policy documents about demonstrations, protests, and civil unrest; and requests for assistance made by the Wauwatosa Police for outside agencies to respond to protests, disturbances and civil unrest during September and October 2020. As of Nov. 24, 2020, that request had not yet been fulfilled.

This release is available online at:

<https://www.aclu-wi.org/en/news/aclu-wisconsin-responds--reports-indicating-wauwatosa-police-department-inflates-public-records>