



To: Scott Morelli

From: Chief Dan Ahern

Date: 19 May 2025

Re: Deering High School Detention

Mr. Manager,

As you know, on May 13, 2025, police officers from the South Portland Police Department went to 19 Orkney Street in Portland to serve an arrest warrant and a search warrant of that address. Officers were expecting to locate and arrest Miles Hibbard, described as a light skin black male, 5 '10", 150 lbs, with brown hair and brown eyes. They had a felony arrest warrant for burglary and a warrant to search the home for evidence of a crime.

Due to the violent nature of the crime (a handgun was shown) and other information known to investigators (the suspect's involvement with other individuals known to possess and use guns in the commission of crimes) a warrant service risk assessment was conducted (policy). The scoring matrix for this warrant service received a score that did not consider it high risk but would require consultation with the SWAT Commander (Lt. Ben Macisso). An operation plan was formulated which included reaching out to Portland PD for assistance.

With the description of the suspect and a license photo, officers traveled in both marked and unmarked vehicles to the target house, 19 Orkney Street Portland; the time was approximately 10:55 AM. This address is approximately 500 feet away from Deering High School, which was in session at the time. The time of the warrant service was originally scheduled for 8:30 AM, but changed due to the thought that there would be the potential for more students travelling to school in the area around that time. Officer Verville, a South Portland Officer and also a member of the Southern Maine Regional SWAT Team, was operating a marked South Portland cruiser and was the lead vehicle as they approached the target house.

As they turned onto Orkney from Stevens, they immediately saw an individual matching the description of Miles Hibbard exit a vehicle and walk towards 19 Orkney. Officers believed this was Hibbard and ordered him to stop. The individual stopped and walked back to the officers where he was instructed to kneel and then lay on the ground (Portland officer body worn camera

documents this detention). Detective Jon Stearns appears to walk up to the person being handcuffed and quickly determines it is not Hibbard. The individual, a 16 year old black male with light skin color and hair matching Hibbard, is a student on lunch break from Deering High School. School Resource Officer (SRO) Caleb Gray, also a member of the SWAT team, escorts him away from the scene, uncuffs him, and can be heard stating he will explain everything to him. The student is released and free to return to school. From the time he was handcuffed and released was less than two minutes, the whole encounter was less than 5 minutes.

Upon review of this incident, including dash mounted camera footage and body worn camera footage, I'm not sure how we could have or would have done anything different given the information we had at the time. In fact I was proud of the way our officers handled the student whom they initially thought was the subject of the warrant.

After carefully reviewing this incident including all relevant materials and interviews with involved officers, I'm confident that no policies were violated and officers acted in accordance with best practices and conducted themselves as professionals.

Respectfully

Daniel J. Ahern

Chief of Police