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Columbia police officers in use-of-force video 'no longer employed' by Friday, mayor says

KOMU 8 Digital Staff

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Editor's Note

This story was updated with the officers' names, details on their employment, as well as a new statement from Columbia Mayor Barbara Buffaloe.

COLUMBIA – Two Columbia police officers who are currently under investigation for the apparent use of force during an arrest will no longer be employed, Mayor Barbara Buffaloe confirmed to KOMU 8 Monday afternoon.

"It is my understanding that the officers involved in the incident are no longer employed by the city or will cease employment with the city on May 19," Buffaloe said. She did not clarify if the officers resigned or were let go since it was "personnel related."

Speaking during a Columbia City Council meeting Monday night, Buffaloe reiterated that both officers will no longer work for the city and asked the public for patience as the city handled the situation as best it could.

"It's been a rough week for our community," Buffaloe said. "I acknowledge when we have incidents happen, that sometimes we ask for patience and grace, and it's to make sure that we handle the situations correctly. Making sure that we're handling it also from a place of caring and supporting our community members. We try not to jump to conclusions or to capitalize on drama taking place."

No charges have been filed a week after the incident outside Harpo's Bar and Grill that led to questions surrounding the amount of force used by the two officers.

KOMU 8 News obtained the arrest report filed for the incident, which identifies the officers as Gardner Pottorff and Keenen Shouse, as well as the man they arrested.

Video of the incident shows the officers responding to Harpo's Bar and Grill in downtown Columbia early in the morning on May 7. One officer could be seen using mace and tasers on a man outside the bar, as well as pinning him to the ground and punching his face.

CPD requested the sheriff's office investigate the incident. A spokesperson for the sheriff's office told KOMU 8 News they won't release reports or specific information until those become open records.

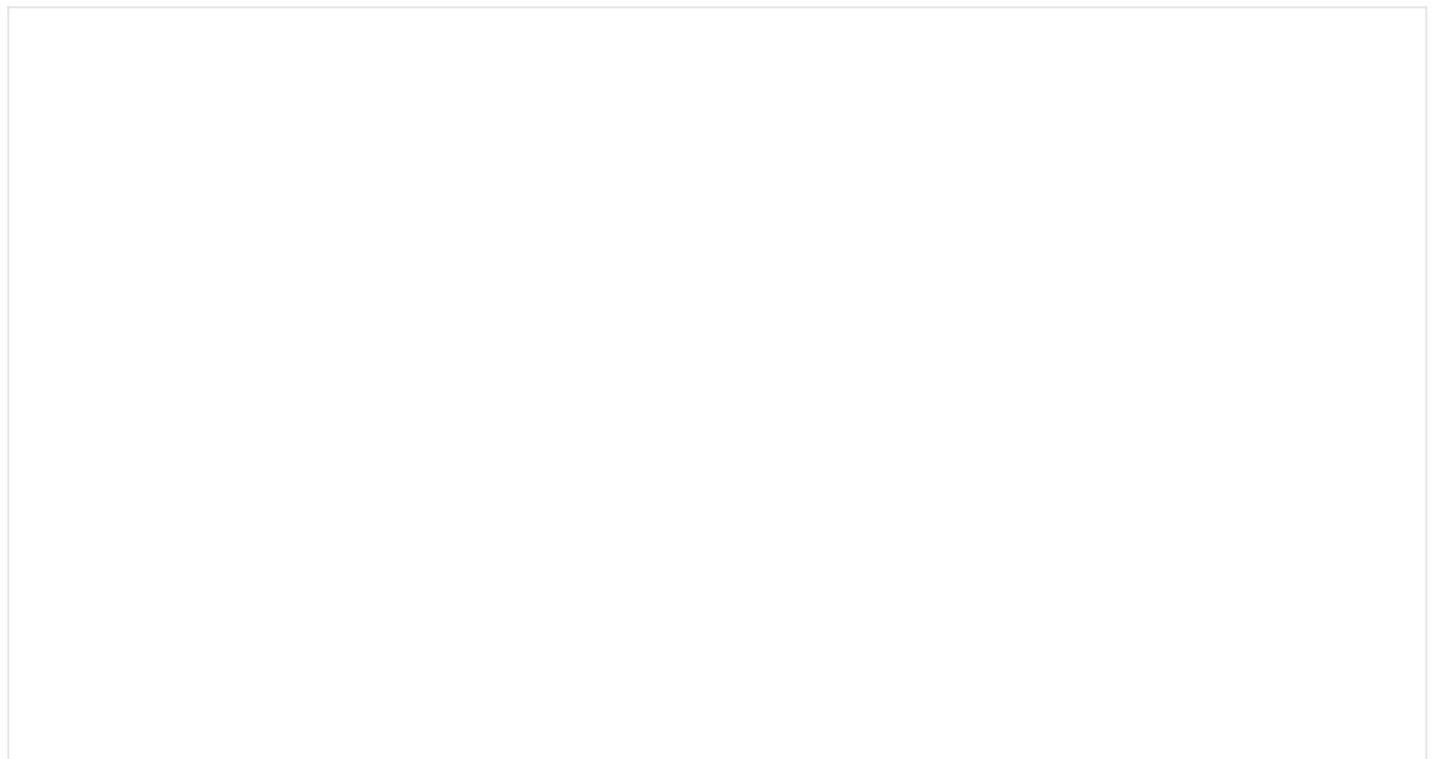
After the incident, Columbia Police Chief Geoff Jones confirmed both officers were not scheduled to work the following week but didn't say whether that was related to the incident.

In the days following the incident, the Columbia Citizens Police Review Board opted to delay planned discussion of CPD's use of force policies, though the incident did come up during public comment.

Buffaloe and City Manager De'Carlton Seewood also released statements about the incident, explaining the process for the investigation.

When asked for comment on Monday, Buffaloe said, "as I said last week, the council condemns unreasonable use of force by police officers."

MORE INFORMATION





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