**Lower Columbia Major Crimes Team**

**October 2nd, 2020 Officer Involved Shooting Investigation**

**Case #A20-2486**

**Press Release 5 – October 23rd, 2020**

The Lower Columbia Major Crimes Team has completed its investigation of the October 2nd, 2020 officer-involved shooting in Longview, Washington. Through extensive investigation, investigators have established the following details:

1. Detectives with the Longview Police Street Crimes unit were on duty on October 2nd, 2020. They were wearing vests marked “POLICE” and identified themselves as police officers. The detectives were operating a marked patrol car, with emergency lights activated, when they attempted to contact Justin Tofte.
2. The detectives were seeking to arrest Tofte on a felony warrant for his arrest. The detectives had received information that Tofte had recently been in possession of a firearm.
3. The detectives identified themselves and gave Tofte lawful commands to stop, and advised him he was under arrest. Tofte was non-compliant and fled on foot. As detectives pursued Tofte, they noted he had something heavy in his right coat pocket and was reaching into that pocket as he fled.
4. Detective Sanders deployed a TASER while pursuing Tofte through an alley. Surveillance video showed Tofte fall, but he quickly returned to his feet and continue to run. Data retrieved from the TASER showed there was only an intermittent connection, meaning the TASER deployment did not result in the intended neuromuscular incapacitation.
5. While running through the alley, Tofte fell and an item slid away from his person. Detective Sanders recognized this to be a pistol and ordered Tofte to put his hands behind his back. Tofte immediately picked up the gun and Detective Sanders stated he believed Tofte presented an imminent threat to his life and the life of Detective Hartley, as well as a danger to the public. Detective Sanders fired three shots, striking Tofte once in the right axilla area.
6. Tofte continued to run after being shot, eventually stopping on 14th Avenue where he was taken into custody after making suicidal comments. Officers immediately provided first aid and medical units arrived on scene within approximately four minutes of the shooting. Tofte was transported to the hospital and did not survive his injury.
7. Early in the investigation detectives learned items had been removed from the scene prior to the arrival of scene security officers. Detectives have identified and interviewed the involved subjects.
8. The Smith and Wesson M&P Bodyguard .380 caliber semiautomatic pistol recovered from Tofte was stolen from a Cowlitz County resident.
9. Toxicology results show the presence of methamphetamine, opiates and THC in Tofte’s system.

The Lower Columbia Major Crimes Team investigative report will be submitted to the Cowlitz County Prosecutor next week. The medical examiner’s report and any other pending laboratory reports will be submitted to the Prosecutor’s Office upon receipt.

Troy Brightbill

Chief Criminal Deputy / Cowlitz County Sheriff’s Office

Commander / Lower Columbia Major Crimes Team