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WILLIAM SCOTT
CHIEF OF POLICE

January 22, 2024

Board of Supervisors
City and County of San Francisco
City Hall, Room 244
1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Pl
San Francisco, CA 94102

President Peskin and Members:

Re: SF Administrative Code 19B.7, Written Exigency Report: Interagency Operation and Use of Unmanned Aerial Support (“UAS” or “Drone”) on October 18, 2023.

SF Admin. Code 19B (“19B”) was enacted in August 2019. Under 19B.7, the San Francisco Police Department (“SFPD” or “Department”) is required to report to Board of Supervisors the acquisition or use of the Surveillance Technology, as defined by Chapter 19B, in exigent circumstances.

While the SFPD did not acquire, use, or manage the use of Surveillance Technology on October 18, 2023, the Department did benefit from support, situational awareness, and information provided by the Unmanned Aerial Support (“UAS”) owned and operated by San Bruno Police Department (“SBPD”) in South San Francisco.

The Department is issuing this 19B.7 written exigency report to the Board of Supervisors out of an abundance of caution as the presence of SFPD during another law enforcement agency’s use of the UAS does not squarely fall under the 19B.7 provisions. This exigency report provides an overview to confirm the following:

- The use of the Surveillance Technology was solely to respond to an exigent circumstance.
- The use of the Surveillance Technology ceased within seven days.
- Data from the Surveillance Technology was not retained by SFPD, except as required by law; and
- Data from the Surveillance Technology was not disclosed to a third party, except as required by law.

Use of the Surveillance Technology was solely to respond to the exigent circumstance:

An ongoing investigation by SFPD’s Investigations Bureau, determined that a known subject of an arrest warrant had ties to a residence in South San Francisco. SFPD members obtained a search warrant for seeking firearms and evidence relating a shooting incident that occurred between groups of people where multiple firearms were used.

Due to certain factors derived from the investigation, a risk-assessment and analysis by SFPD’s Tactical Unit determined that this would be a high-risk operation with the potential for imminent danger of death or serious physical injury to any person involved.

The following are some of the factors that qualified the search and arrest warrant execution as a high-risk operation:

1. Known information, including the criminal history, of the wanted suspect.

January 22, 2024

2. Known information regarding other individuals likely present at the location(s).
3. The target location was tied to a subject believed to be involved in the shooting incident that occurred between groups of people where multiple firearms were used.
4. The target location did not allow officers safe access to secure the exterior premises prior to serving the search warrant. Officers had knowledge that the suspects had fled from the house with firearms during a prior search warrant.

On October 18, 2023, SFPD's Tactical Unit executed the high-risk search warrant on the South San Francisco residence while SBPD's UAS team managed the use of the UAS. The operation resulted in the arrest of one suspect and the seizure of one (1) assault rifle, three (3) pistols, and a large volume of ammunition and high-capacity magazines. No injuries were sustained by individuals inside the target location, by bystanders, or by officers involved.

The use of the Surveillance Technology ceased within seven days:

SBPD operated the UAS and provided information to the officers on scene. SFPD officers benefited from live optical information from the UASs for approximately 20 minutes on October 18th. The SBPD ceased deployment of the UAS for this specific operation on October 18th.

Retention of data from the Surveillance Technology:

The SBPD UAS did not transmit still photos or video footage to SFPD and as such, there was no surveillance technology data to be retained by the Department. SBPD did transmit to SFPD situational awareness information by using the UAS. This information was provided verbally and over radio communications.

Data from the Surveillance Technology was not shared with a Third-Party:

SBPD did not share still photos or video footage from their UAS with SFPD. SFPD did not record, receive, retain, file, or share video or still photos from the UAS with another party.

This written report summarizes the use of Surveillance Technology under Section 19B.7 to the Board of Supervisors.

Respectfully submitted,



WILLIAM SCOTT

Chief of Police

cc: Police Commission
SF Committee on Information Technology