DEADLY FORCE REVIEW PANEL
6 STATE HOUSE STATION · AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

July 10, 2025

The Hon. Anne M. Carney, Senate Chair
The Hon. Amy D. Kuhn, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

The Deadly Force Review Panel completed its 44th review of a law enforcement officer's use of deadly force. Under Title 5, section 200(K)(7), "within 30 days of the conclusion of the examination of the use of deadly force by a law enforcement officer . . . the panel shall submit a report on the panel's activities, conclusions, and recommendations about the incident to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over judiciary matters." The report is enclosed.

The Panel examined the October 30, 2023, incident in Rumford, the details of which are included in the Panel's enclosed report.

For the Deadly Force Review Panel:

Fernand Larochelle, Chair
Stephen Burlock, Vice Chair

Enclosure

cc:
Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee
Health & Human Services Committee

October 30, 2023 – Rumford Use of Deadly Force Incident

As required by 5 M.R.S. § 200-K, the Maine Deadly Force Review Panel submits the following report on the use of deadly force incident in Rumford on October 30, 2023, involving Corporal Joshua Alyward and Deputy Matthew Steinort, which resulted in the death of Sean Dyment, age 23. By statute, after the release of the report from the Attorney General, the Panel shall examine deaths or serious injuries resulting from the use of deadly force by law enforcement officers. The purpose of this examination is to independently determine whether there was compliance with accepted best practices under the circumstances or if those practices require adjustment or improvement. The Panel may recommend methods for improving standards, including changes to statutes, rules, training, and policies and procedures to ensure best practices that enhance public and officer safety. It should be noted that the Panel's "Observations" are case-specific bullet points pulled directly from the incident case file and are primarily intended to highlight key pieces of information. The Panel's "Recommendations" should be viewed as potential system-level issues that agencies should consider during future critical incidents. The Panel is not tasked with conducting a de novo review of the Attorney General's determination regarding the legality of the use of deadly force by law enforcement; discussions, observations, and recommendations are made independently of the Attorney General.

Synopsis

On Monday, October 30, 2023, at 8:13 p.m., a woman called 911 and reported being closely followed by a vehicle after she had "honked" at it when it passed her vehicle on a side road near her home in Rumford. Dispatch advised her to drive to the Rumford Police Department immediately, where an officer would meet her in front of the building. Deputy Matthew Steinort and Corporal Joshua Aylward of the Oxford County Sheriff's Office were patrolling the Rumford area. The two deputies, along with a Mexico police officer, heard the radio traffic and headed for the Rumford Police Department. A vehicle directly behind one of the deputies stopped abruptly in the roadway. The officers recognized the vehicle as the one reported by the 911 caller. Deputy Aylward recognized the driver as Sean Dyment, with whom he had interacted earlier in the evening when Mr. Dyment drove up to Cpl. Aylward's parked cruiser, said "bad things are happening tonight," and drove off. After a series of encounters that included Mr. Dyment operating his vehicle erratically in "go and stop" maneuvers and Mr. Dyment refusing to communicate with the officers except to threaten them, Mr. Dyment brandished an AR-style rifle and refused to relinquish it on command. When Mr. Dyment pointed the rifle directly at Cpl. Aylward and a Rumford police sergeant, Deputy Steinort and Cpl. Aylward shot at Mr. Dyment, who, struck by gunfire, was a short time later pronounced dead at a local hospital.

Information the Panel Reviewed

Before its meeting, the Panel members received and reviewed all the investigative material compiled by the Attorney General. The material consisted of all the original investigative data, including interviews, video recordings, reports, forensic reports, photographs, emergency

communications, and other relevant materials. The Panel also reviewed the Attorney General's April 18, 2024, report. Despite multiple requests, the Oxford County Sheriff's Office did not provide the Incident Review Team report, citing that it was incomplete.

Panel Discussion

On April 24, 2025, the Panel convened via Zoom to review the referenced incident. Several issues were discussed, including the increasing presence of methamphetamine and other illicit substances in deadly force situations, the suspect's absence of any criminal history, and the unusual presence of a 60-round magazine. The absence of cruiser or body cameras was also mentioned.

Case Specific Observations

1. The 23-year-old suspect connected to this incident had no criminal history and legally obtained his AK-style rifle in March 2023.

2. The suspect had exhibited unusual behavior, which resulted in him being fired from his job at the Irving sawmill a week before the deadly force incident. After his termination, the suspect posted a photo of an AK assault rifle and vest on his social media page. The Oxford Sheriff's Department conducted a well-being check at his residence and determined that he was not a threat to himself or others.

3. The day before the incident, the suspect filed a baseless report with the Oxford County Sheriff's Office, claiming that his former boss was harassing and stalking him. A coworker said that the suspect was becoming increasingly paranoid. The suspect's grandfather stated that he was not receiving mental health treatment but seemed upset and troubled about something.

4. The postmortem toxicology report indicated that the suspect's methamphetamine level was high at 620 ng/mL. This report notes that blood levels of 200-600 ng/mL have been associated with the display of violent and irrational behavior, and that high doses can also cause restlessness, confusion, hallucinations, and more. The suspect also had a documented history of marijuana dependency according to his primary care physician.

5. The panel has noticed an increase in the use of methamphetamines and other illegal drugs during deadly force incidents.

6. The Oxford County deputy sheriffs did not have cruiser or body cameras. The Mexico officer's body cam was not turned on until after the deadly force was used, but she strategically parked her cruiser to capture much of the deadly force encounter on her cruiser camera. The Rumford sergeant's body camera video and audio were extremely helpful during the panel's review.

7. The Panel noted that the suspect's possession of a 60-round magazine was unusual.

8. The Panel commended the supervisor's efforts to ensure the welfare of the officers involved.

9. The sergeant did a great job ensuring the original complainant's safe exit from the area. by having officers block the road so that she could leave the scene.

10. Despite multiple requests, the Oxford County Sheriff's Office did not provide the Incident Review Team report, citing that it was incomplete.

System Level Recommendations

1. As noted in prior case reports, the Panel recommends that law enforcement agencies obtain and use cruiser and body camera equipment. Once officers arrive at the scene, body cameras should be turned on immediately. Responding officers should also carry the audio pack for their cruiser camera on their person.

Factual Summary

On Monday, October 30, 2023, at approximately 8:13 p.m., a woman called 911 to report that she was being followed by a vehicle driven by an unknown man. The caller reported that she had "honked" at the vehicle, and the vehicle started following her closely. She was concerned because her young son was in the back seat. The dispatcher advised her to drive to the Rumford Police Department, where an officer would meet her.

Deputy Matthew Steinort and Cpl. Joshua Aylward of the Oxford County Sheriff's Office were on patrol in the Rumford area when they heard the radio traffic. They both traveled to the Rumford Police Department to assist a Rumford police sergeant, who planned to meet the woman caller at the police department. Additionally, a Mexico police officer, who was on her way to the Rumford Police Department, also heard the radio traffic. While Cpl. Aylward and the Rumford police sergeant met with the woman outside the police department, Deputy Steinort arrived, closely followed by a vehicle. Cpl. Aylward recognized Sean Dyment as the vehicle operator from an earlier interaction that evening. Mr. Dyment had driven next to him in his parked cruiser and said, "Bad things are happening tonight." Officer Steinort positioned his cruiser perpendicular to the roadway to prevent Mr. Dyment from driving off, allowing the woman to leave the area.

Mr. Dyment then backed up on the roadway slowly and stopped. Officers attempted to communicate with Mr. Dyment, but he yelled profanities, including threats to kill them. At one point, Mr. Dyment accelerated toward Deputy Steinort but then stopped. Mr. Dyment asked the officers for their names, and they provided them. Cpl. Aylward and the sergeant were on the sidewalk near the police department, while Deputy Steinort was across the street. Deputy Steinort was closer to Mr. Dyment and heard him say that he was going to "[expletive] kill you, Josh." Mr. Dyment also informed Deputy Steinort that he had a gun. Deputy Steinort shouted to Cpl. Aylward that Mr. Dyment had a gun and would use it. Mr. Dyment can be heard on the sergeant's body

camera footage saying, "I have a firearm." Deputy Steinort then saw and heard what he believed to be the racking of an AR-style rifle. Cpl. Aylward also reported observing what he thought was the motion of Mr. Dyment racking an AR-style weapon.

Deputy Steinort commanded Mr. Dyment to drop the gun and began backing away. Deputy Steinort and the Mexico officer then observed Mr. Dyment point the gun directly at Cpl. Aylward and the sergeant. Deputy Steinort shot at Mr. Dyment, followed by Cpl. Aylward also firing at Mr. Dyment.

Mr. Dyment, struck by gunfire, was taken to a local hospital, where he was pronounced dead. A subsequent postmortem examination by the Office of Chief Medical Examiner determined that Mr. Dyment's cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds. Toxicology results indicated that Mr. Dyment had amphetamines and methamphetamines in his system. A later investigation revealed that the rifle with which Mr. Dyment threatened the officers contained a chambered live round and 17 additional live rounds in the magazine.

Panel Members

Fernand LaRochelle, Chair

Stephen Burlock, Esq., Assistant District Attorney (Retired), Vice Chair/Secretary

Michael Alpert, Greater Bangor Area Branch NAACP

John Chapman, Esq.

Jack Clements, Chief of Police, Saco

Sandra Slemmer, designee of Alice J. Briones, D.O., Chief Medical Examiner

Anna Love, Chief, Attorney General Investigations

Joel Merry, Sheriff, Sagadahoc County

Joshua Daley, designee of Jack Peck, Director, Maine Criminal Justice Academy

Michael Sauschuck, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety

Benjamin Strick, Vice President of Adult Behavioral Health, Spurwink

Note: The individuals who serve on the Panel are appointed to bring their professional expertise to bear on discussions of these complex cases. Thus, members of the Panel may know or have had contact with individuals involved in the case under review. In such situations, members report such affiliations to the Panel, and that information is recorded in the meeting minutes. If panel members determine that they have a conflict of interest, they are excused from voting on the panel’s observations and recommendations regarding that case.