

**Department of Public Safety Standards and Training
(DPSST or the Department)
Memo**

Date: July 23, 2026

To: Board on Public Safety Standards and Training

From: Melissa Lang-Bacho, Professional Standards Case Coordinator

Subject: **Professional Standards Review/Recommendation**
Corey Budworth; DPSST No. 55392

Reason for Discretionary Review

On June 15, 2021, Corey Budworth was indicted on criminal charges for *Assault in the Fourth Degree*. Budworth's indictment stemmed from conduct occurring on August 18, 2020, while working as an officer with the Portland Police Bureau (PPB). Budworth used unjustified force against a photojournalist attending a protest in Portland, by pushing her to the ground and hitting her in the head with his baton while she was seated. On July 7, 2023, through a restorative justice process, the criminal charges against Budworth were dismissed.

Policy Committee Recommendation

The Police Policy Committee (PPC), in a unanimous vote, recommends that the Board negate the moral fitness violations identified by the Department.

Policy Committee Review

The PPC reviewed the moral fitness violations below and identified aggravating and mitigating factors and factors in making their recommendation. The PPC negated the Department's findings determining the moral fitness violations identified were unintentional policy violations.

Moral Fitness Violations:

- Dishonesty: Neither the Department nor the PPC identified sufficient information to make a finding of dishonesty.
- Misuse of Authority: Neither the Department nor the PPC identified sufficient information to make a finding of misuse of authority.
- Misconduct: The Department identified moral fitness violations that Budworth's conduct physically and emotionally harmed a photojournalist documenting a protest in Portland. Budworth's conduct harmed the City of Portland, resulting in a civil lawsuit payment of \$50,000. Budworth's use of force negatively impacted the efficient operations of the PPB by threatening the relationship between the PPB and the community it serves. The PPC negated the Department's findings of Misconduct.

Aggravating Factors:

- Budworth's push with his baton did make contact with the photojournalist's head.

Mitigating Factors:

- The contact Budworth made with the photojournalist's head was unintentional.
- There was turmoil at the time in the city; Budworth's actions were understandable.
- The explanation of the tactics used by protestors was mitigating to Budworth's conduct.
- Command staff believed an unarrest had occurred. Although that was not what happened it should be considered.
- Protestors were running at Budworth.
- Protestors were ordered to leave.
- How Budworth conducted himself was mitigating.
- Budworth provided multiple letters of support, including letters from the District Attorney, Chief of Police and peers.
- Budworth's verbal mitigation statement was mitigating.
- Budworth participated in a restorative justice process which was publicly posted.
- Budworth is on the promotion list.
- Budworth has provided a service to the community by serving as a baseball coach.

Information Used in Determination

- Transcript of the verbal mitigation.
- PPC Staff Report, with exhibits.

Action Item

Review the committee recommendation and approve or return the recommendation to the policy committee.

**Department of Public Safety Standards and Training
(DPSST or the Department)
Memo**

Date: May 21, 2026

To: Police Policy Committee

From: Melissa Lang-Bacho
Professional Standards Compliance Coordinator

Subject: **Staff Report – Criminal**
Corey Budworth, DPSST No. 55392

Reason for Discretionary Review

On June 15, 2021, Corey Budworth was indicted on criminal charges for *Assault in the Fourth Degree*. Budworth's indictment stemmed from conduct occurring on August 18, 2020, while working as an officer with the Portland Police Bureau (PPB). Budworth used unjustified force against a photojournalist attending a protest in Portland, by pushing her to the ground and hitting her in the head with his baton while she was seated. On July 7, 2023, through a restorative justice process, the criminal charges against Budworth were dismissed.

The Department determined that the conduct being presented to the committee violates the Board's moral fitness standards. Through the case review process, the committee will affirm, modify or negate the below identified moral fitness violations and make a determination on the disposition of this case:

Dishonesty: The Department did not identify sufficient information to make a finding of dishonesty.

Misuse of Authority: The Department did not identify sufficient information to make a finding of misuse of authority.

Misconduct: Budworth's conduct physically and emotionally harmed a photojournalist documenting a protest in Portland. Budworth's conduct harmed the City of Portland resulting in a civil lawsuit payment of \$50,000. Budworth's use of force negatively impacted the efficient operations of the PPB by threatening the relationship between the PPB and the community it serves.

Material Events and Conduct.

On August 20, 2020, a criminal investigation began after a video from August 18, 2020, circulated on social media depicting Budworth using force on a photojournalist, pushing her to the ground and hitting her in the head with his baton while she was seated.

Video and reporting from the incident reflect a chaotic event on the 82nd day of protesting in the city. Protestors reportedly had broken windows at the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office and had started a fire in the building. A riot was declared, and officers were ordered to clear the area so fire professionals could respond to the fire.

Twelve officers formed a line spanning the width of the street and advanced down the street to move protestors from the area. Press observing the protests were permitted to remain on the sidewalks. After the first pass through the area by officers, protestors began to reassemble in the cleared area. Officers were deployed again to form a line to walk down the street to ensure people would not return to the building that was on fire and provide a buffer zone for firefighters. In the second pass by officers, they increased the speed of their advancement from a walk to a jog. A protestor with a speaker in a rolling suitcase ended up on her hands and knees on the ground in front of the line of officers. Another officer in the line grabbed the woman with the speaker by her backpack and attempted to pull her back onto her feet and out of the way. While the officer was attempting to pull the woman with the speaker up, at least two persons had grabbed the woman and were attempting to drag her away (A4 page 190).

At that same time the officer was attempting to pull the woman with the speaker up off the ground, Budworth was hit by someone or something on his right shoulder and/or chest which caused him to fall to the ground. Budworth is injured in the fall and is hit by pepper spray which was deployed by his sergeant (A4 page 321). As Budworth gets up he sees the woman with the speaker on the ground and an officer on top of her. Multiple people were attempting to pull the woman with the speaker to the sidewalk.

Budworth engaged with one of the persons pulling the woman with the speaker away, a woman who was attending the protest as a photojournalist. Budworth believed¹ the other officer was attempting to arrest the woman with the speaker (A4 page 322), and that the photojournalist was attempting to unarrest the woman with the speaker, which meant that Budworth's job was to push² the photojournalist away from the situation.

Budworth used his baton to push the photojournalist from behind on her upper back, which was covered by a backpack. The push from Budworth caused the photojournalist to push into the crowd and the crowd pushed the photojournalist back toward Budworth. Budworth then pushes the photojournalist again two more times with his baton from behind and she runs forward a few steps before stumbling to the ground. As the photojournalist reaches the ground, she rolls to a seated position. While the photojournalist was seated, she grabbed her press pass to display (A4 page 328) it and Budworth used his baton again, this time the baton made contact with the woman's head.

Budworth denied seeing the photojournalist's press pass or her camera. When the photojournalist was on the ground in the seated position, grabbing for her press pass, Budworth believed that she was using her hands to get up off the ground to re-engage with him, however, she remained seated. When Budworth made the final push with his baton which made contact with the woman on her head, he was aiming for her shoulder. When the photojournalist did not get up and remained seated, Budworth's trajectory of the push with his baton was wrong and struck the woman on the head instead of her shoulder. Budworth denied intentionally striking the photojournalist on the head.

¹ The other officer indicated that she was not attempting to arrest the woman with the speaker, she was attempting to pull her up to her feet.

² "Push" was described as Budworth holding his baton horizontally across his body with one hand at each end, and an extension of his arms forcefully outwards.

At the conclusion of the criminal investigation, the detective did not find probable cause to believe Budworth committed *Assault* or *Official Misconduct*. The investigator indicates that he did not have sufficient information to show Budworth's actions were intentional, knowingly or recklessly which was a requirement for the criminal charge.

The case was forwarded to the District Attorney's office, who presented the case to a Grand Jury. On June 15, 2021, the Grand Jury returned an indictment for *Assault in the Fourth Degree*.

On June 7, 2023, the criminal charges against Budworth were dismissed after he and the photojournalist engaged in a restorative justice process.

Budworth apologized to the photojournalist in a video statement which was released publicly by the Oregon Justice Reform Center. In the video, Budworth indicates that he acknowledges the physical and emotional harm his actions have caused to the photojournalist, and he commits to ensuring that he does not cause this kind of harm moving forward. Budworth states the force used against the photojournalist could have been avoided and apologized for unnecessarily hitting the photojournalist in the head with his baton. Budworth states that he understands the harm caused is not limited to the photojournalist and was felt by others in the community when there was a great distrust of law enforcement. Budworth apologized for his contribution to any loss of trust in the community he serves.

Following the conclusion of the criminal proceedings, the PPB completed an administrative review of the use of force events. The PPB review focused on four areas: The Application of Deadly Force, Confrontation Management, and the Application of Less Lethal Force. Their findings indicate that Budworth was out of policy for Confrontation Management and The Application of Less Lethal Force. The PPB investigation findings indicate that Budworth's last use of force was the basis for the finding that he was out of policy for Confrontation Management. Budworth was issued a letter of reprimand for his conduct that was out of policy.

One of the reviewers participating in the administrative process found that Budworth was out of policy for the last push with his baton. The reviewer indicates they "do not believe the evidence shows that the officer was trying to terminate the commission or attempted commission of a crime the moment the last force was used. [The photojournalist] had been pushed to the ground. The officer had successfully terminated her commission or attempt to commit the earlier relevant crimes with his push that caused her to turn and run... Using force against a person sitting on the ground because they may be assisted by a third party or because they may get up is not justified..." The reviewer further indicates that "...the officer pauses and assesses [the photojournalist] momentarily before the final use of force. Stopping, even for a moment as he did, is prudent, but I believe the video shows that her momentum is moving backward or at least that she is not getting up and that the officer chose to push her in a way that does not help him 'accomplish official purpose or duty.'"

A civil lawsuit was filed by the photojournalist against the City of Portland for civil rights violations and excessive force. On March 30, 2021, a judgment was issued against the City of Portland for \$50,000, plus \$11,000 in attorney fees. No admission of liability or damages was made in the case.

Relevant Circumstances for Consideration

Budworth obtained Basic Police certification and has applied for Intermediate and Advanced Police Certifications.

Budworth is employed with the Portland Police Bureau and has been employed in public safety for 9.5 years.

Recommendations for corrective action were redacted from the records received by DPSST from the PPB.

Budworth did not report his criminal charge to the Department.

If the committee recommends action in this case, the start date for an ineligibility period would be based on the date of the board review scheduled for July 24, 2025.

Exhibits Reference

DPSST Employee Profile Report	A1
Criminal Court Records – 21CR28669	A2
Civil Suit Complaint, Judgment and Register	A3
Portland Police Bureau Case File 2020-B-0069	A4
Portland Police Bureau Letter of Reprimand	A5
Written Mitigation	A6
August 18, 2020, Video (1)	A7
August 18, 2020, Video (2)	A8
August 18, 2020, Video (3)	A9
Budworth Apology Video	A10