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

Date: October 22, 2026

To: Board on Public Safety Standards and Training

From: Melissa Lang-Bacho, Professional Standards Case Coordinator

Subject: **Professional Standards Review/Recommendation**
Matthew Walker; DPSST No. 50518

Reason for Discretionary Review
The Department opened a professional standards case to review Matthew Walker's termination from the Cottage Grove Police Department (CGPD) on October 18, 2023. Walker grieved his termination through the arbitration process and was reinstated with a demotion on April 16, 2025.

The arbitrator did not find sufficient evidence that Walker violated policies in a third incident involving Walker allowing citizens to use agency machine guns and submachine guns. The arbitrator did not find sufficient evidence to make a finding that Walker committed *Official Misconduct* or violated state and federal law related to the use of the machine guns and recommends administrative closure of those allegations under OAR 259-008-0310(9)(c). The Department retains the authority to review the conduct for moral fitness violations.

The arbitrator did find sufficient evidence that Walker violated agency policies in two incidents, one involving a woman held in jail and another involving the use of the CGPD's Intoxilyzer.

After reviewing the case record, DPSST determined there was sufficient evidence for the Police Policy Committee (PPC) to consider the following moral fitness findings:

*Moral Fitness Violations**:***

- Dishonesty: The Department did not identify sufficient information to make a finding of dishonesty.
- Misuse of Authority: Separate from the CGPD policy and the Arbitrator's opinion, Walker violated the Board's moral fitness standard for Misuse of Authority. Walker intentionally used his position as Armorer, which gave him access to machine and submachine guns, to obtain a benefit. Walker used his access to machine and submachine guns and allowed members of the public to use the firearms for non-official purposes for the benefit of the members of the public. Walker intentionally used Intoxilyzer equipment for non-official use, for the benefit of another.
- Misconduct: Walker harmed a person when he held a woman in custody after a judge ordered her to be released from custody. Walker threatened persons or property by failing to make the arrest of a man who drove to the police station while intoxicated.

Policy Committee Review
In reviewing the case, the PPC found and considered the following aggravating and mitigating circumstances:

Aggravating Factors:

- The committee did not identify any aggravating factors.

Mitigating Factors:

- Walker worked his entire career in law enforcement at the Cottage Grove Police Department, which was facing significant challenges with the leadership of the agency.
- Information Walker received at the agency was passed down by word of mouth rather than established in standards and protocols.
- The agency was in disarray.
- The poor performance of the agency should not be placed on Walker alone.
- Walker did professional work while off duty and performed maintenance on weapons at home.
- Walker did what he needed to do to support the agency.
- Walker provided letters of support to the committee.
- The new CGPD chief attended the meeting to show support for Walker.

Policy Committee Recommendation
After considering the case materials, aggravating and mitigating factors, and mitigation supplied, the PPC, in a unanimous vote, recommends that the Board ***negate*** the moral fitness violations for misuse of authority and ***affirm*** moral fitness violations for misconduct. The PPC further recommends, in a unanimous vote, that the Board take **NO ACTION** against Matthew Walker's certifications.

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: August 20, 2026

To: Police Policy Committee

From: Melissa Lang-Bacho
Professional Standards Compliance Coordinator

Subject: **Staff Report – Separation**
Matthew Walker, DPSST No. 50518

Reason for Discretionary Review

The Department opened a professional standards case to review Matthew Walker's termination from the Cottage Grove Police Department (CGPD) on October 18, 2023. Walker grieved his termination through the arbitration process and was reinstated with a demotion on April 16, 2025.

The arbitrator did not find sufficient evidence that Walker violated policies in a third incident involving Walker allowing citizens to use agency machine guns and submachine guns. The arbitrator did not find sufficient evidence to make a finding that Walker committed *Official Misconduct* or violated state and federal law related to the use of the machine guns and recommends administrative closure of those allegations under OAR 259-008-0310(9)(c). The Department retains the authority to review the conduct for moral fitness violations.

The arbitrator did find sufficient evidence that Walker violated agency policies in two incidents, one involving a woman held in jail and another involving the use of the CGPD's Intoxilyzer.

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 intentionally dishonest conduct.

Misuse of Authority: Separate from the CGPD policy and the Arbitrator's opinion, Walker violated the Board's moral fitness standard for Misuse of Authority. Walker intentionally used his position as Armorer, which gave him access to machine and submachine guns to obtain a benefit. Walker used his access to machine and submachine guns and allowed members of the public to use the firearms for non-official purposes for the benefit of the members of the public.

Walker intentionally used Intoxilyzer equipment for non-official use, for the benefit of another.

Misconduct: Walker harmed a person when he held a woman in custody after a judge order her to be released from custody. Walker threatened persons or property by failing to make the arrest of a man who drove to the police station while intoxicated.

Material Events and Conduct.

An independent investigator was hired by the Cottage Grove Police Department (CGPD) to investigate several allegations of misconduct by other members of the CGPD. During the investigations, allegations of misconduct involving Matthew Walker came to light. A total of eight allegations were investigated by an independent investigator, for brevity, only the three sustained findings from the CGPD are discussed in this report:

(1) Walker improperly detained a woman in the city jail, beginning on July 14, 2022, and lasting until July 17, 2022.

(2) Walker failed to take appropriate legal action against individuals who drove from the agency's Christmas party, which was held at another location, to the CGPD while displaying signs of intoxication and driving under the influence.

(3) Walker brought department-owned weapons to his home, including two automatic machine guns, which he used off duty for personal reasons and allowed friends, family, and other civilians to operate the department weapons.

In the first incident (the jail incident), Walker arrested a woman on July 11, 2022, on a *Theft 2* charge and booked her into jail. During her booking, Walker discovered the woman had two pending warrants, with the Lane County Sheriff's Office and the Springfield Police Department. The woman was held in custody until she appeared before the municipal court judge on July 14, 2022. On July 14, 2022, the municipal court judge ordered the woman's release from the Cottage Grove jail, sentencing her to 24 months bench probation and four days in jail with credit for her time already served. Another officer initiated the process of transporting her to Lane County on the outstanding warrant. The warrants were cleared in anticipation of her transport; however, the woman was not transported to Lane County. Walker indicated that when the woman was ordered to be released by the court, he met with another CGPD officer who was preparing to transport the woman and told the officer that he still needed to interview the woman as part of a broader investigation for *Forgery* charges. It was initially decided that a citation in lieu of custody would be written, so transport to the county could occur. No transport occurred, and Walker did not follow established jail policies, which required the woman to be booked back into the jail.

Walker and two other sergeants with the CGPD stopped the woman from being transported. The two sergeants and Walker believed they could hold someone for up to 72 hours. Walker's captain approved keeping the woman in custody while Walker completed his investigation, which he directed him to do the next day.

Walker did not interview the woman over the next two days and planned to interview her on the third day for the new charge. Prior to Walker interviewing her, the woman was taken to the hospital on the third day for an emergency. She was issued a citation in lieu of custody on the new charge and was released from the hospital.

In the second incident (the Intoxilyzer incident), the Cottage Grove Police Association sponsored a Christmas party at a local venue where alcohol was being served. The Christmas party was attended by department members and their spouses. Walker was on duty at the CGPD during the party and approved at least one officer to come to the department to determine his level of impairment. Several police officers and their family members drove from the party, after consuming alcohol, to the CGPD for testing. The records did not establish conclusively whether Walker was at the party and encouraged party goers to come to the station for testing, or if he

was contacted by an officer at the party who requested to come to the station for testing for training purposes.

Walker told the investigator that he was "less than thrilled" when the officer showed up with additional people who were highly intoxicated for testing. Walker administered an Intoxilyzer test to at least two officers and another person.

Walker learned that the husband of one of the officers had driven from the party to the police station and displayed signs of impairment. Walker told the investigator that he pulled the husband to the side and told him that he was showing signs of impairment and should not be driving or be at the police station. Walker did not arrest or cite the man for driving while impaired to the police station but helped the group identify a sober driver who could drive the group home. Walker reported the incident to the Chief the following day, who had already been informed of what happened and had asked a captain to investigate the incident. Walker stated that he was relying upon previous decisions to allow this type of use of the Intoxilyzer. Several weeks later, Walker was given a verbal reprimand for the incident.

In Walker's termination letter, it was determined that the issue of permitting one or more officers to drive to the police department and then administer a breath test was found to have been previously addressed by the chief, however, the investigation found that Walker had probable cause to arrest at least one person who had driven to the police department while under the influence of alcohol. Walker believed that because he did not witness anyone driving, that he did not have probable cause to arrest or issue a citation.

In the third incident (the gun incident), Walker had taken over the role of Armorer with the CGPD. The CGPD owned a semi-automatic weapon (AR-15), which could be joined with a Colt M16 to create a fully automatic gun. The CGPD also owned a fully automatic submachine gun. In Walker's role as Armorer, he was assigned to maintain, test, and repair the weapons owned by the CGPD.

Officers with the CGPD are allotted four days per year to book time at a shooting range to practice and maintain their weapons. Witness testimony during arbitration indicated that the allotted sponsored range days were not sufficient to maintain their skills and weapons. A practice was developed at the CGPD for officers to bring their assigned weapons home and fire them while off duty in order to maintain their skills and weapons. The CGPD also occasionally held shooting events for family members of employees at a local gun range.

Walker was initially assigned an AR-15 and was later assigned the M16, which he was permitted to take home. As the Armorer, Walker was also approved to check out the submachine gun and took it home on at least four occasions between 2019 and 2022, with each checkout lasting for months. At least one additional time in 2017, Walker took the weapons home but there was no record of him checking out the weapons. In two incidents, Walker permitted members of the public to fire the weapons on private and public land while he was off duty. When Walker allowed members of the public to shoot with the CGPD, he used his personal ammunition. Walker believed that events were necessary to help him maintain his own skills and took the weapons home to service them. Walker believed that the CGPD encouraged members of the public to handle the weapons for educational reasons.

The CGPD investigation sustained findings that Walker violated federal law which regulated machine guns and the state law for official misconduct. An independent investigator contacted

federal agencies about Walker allowing members of the public to handle and shoot agency machine guns. The individuals he spoke with indicated that Walker violated federal law related to unlawful transfer or possession of a machine gun, but he would not be charged or prosecuted for these actions and that it could be handled administratively by the city.

The arbitrator did not find sufficient evidence in the allegations against Walker related to the gun incident. The information provided during arbitration did not establish that allowing a civilian to fire rounds from a machine gun would be considered an unlawful transfer or possession under federal law. A definition in a Firearm Act Handbook defined "transfer" to include acts of selling, assigning, pledging, leasing, loaning, giving away, or otherwise disposing of a firearm. Based on the definition, the arbitrator found serious doubt that the act of allowing a citizen to temporarily hold and fire a machine gun would constitute an unlawful transfer under federal law. The record did not provide sufficient proof that Walker's use of the weapons was unauthorized or personal under the state law for official misconduct.

The arbitrator did find sufficient evidence that Walker violated agency policies in relation to the jail and Intoxilyzer incidents.

The arbitrator found that in the jail incident, although Walker violated policies, there was a wrongly held belief by officers, including the captain, that they could detain someone in jail for up to 72 hours without a warrant or charging document. The arbitrator noted that the jail was not an accredited facility, which allowed for practices like the "72-hour rule" to develop, finding that it is problematic for the city to find wrongdoing in a set of behaviors that the city itself helped to create and maintain, which Walker mistakenly came to rely on in making decisions. The arbitrator found that Walker believed he was adhering to an established jail rule.

In the Intoxilyzer incident, the arbitrator found that Walker should have arrested or cited the person who drove from the party to the police department under the influence of alcohol. The arbitrator noted that criminal charging decisions come with a degree of discretion and ambiguity, and Walker offered a coherent rationale for his failure to take action.

The arbitration opinion also indicated that Walker's only employment in law enforcement was at the CGPD, in which his entire tenure occurred during an administration under which rules or associated penalties were not followed or haphazardly applied. There was inconsistent application of those policies and a lack of clarity about what rules existed. The city recognized that the agency was in turmoil and has made efforts since 2022 to reform the police department and hold its employees to the highest standards.

The arbitrator found that in both incidents, Walker's conduct could be rehabilitated with progressive discipline and reinstated Walker to employment with a demotion.

Relevant Circumstances for Consideration
Walker obtained Basic and Intermediate Police certifications.
Walker has been employed in public safety for 17 years.
If the committee recommends action in this case, the start date for an ineligibility period would be based on the date of the Board's review scheduled for October 22, 2026.

Exhibits Reference	
DPSST Employee Profile Report	A1

F4s Personnel Action Separation Form	A2
CGPD Investigation	A3
Termination Letter	A4
Arbitrator's Opinion and Award	A5
Mitigation from Walker	A6