



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: NOVEMBER 28, 2023

FROM: RIVERSIDE POLICE DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: DISBURSE \$20,000 REWARD TO ONE SUBJECT FOR INFORMATION LEADING TO IDENTIFICATION AND APPREHENSION OF PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ATTEMPTED MURDER OF IZAAC COLUNGA AND DOMONIC CASTILLO

## **ISSUE:**

Approve the disbursement of the \$20,000 reward previously authorized by City Council on September 5, 2023, for information leading to the identification and apprehension of the person or persons responsible for the attempted murder of Izaac Colunga and Domonic Castillo that occurred in the City of Riverside, Police Department case #190006841.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the City Council disburse the \$20,000 that was approved by City Council on September 5, 2023, to reward one subject that came forward to supply significant information that helped detectives identify and apprehend the persons responsible for the attempted murder of Izaac Colunga and Domonic Castillo that occurred in the City of Riverside, Police Department case #190006841.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On March 20, 2001, the City Council approved the adoption of a resolution implementing the Police Department's "Riverside Reward Program." Guidelines for offering rewards are listed in section 363 of the Riverside Police Department Policy Manual.

On Friday, March 3, 2019, at approximately 12:11 AM, Riverside Police Department officers responded to the 6400 block of Nidever Avenue, regarding multiple calls of shots fired into a residence. Upon arrival, officers contacted several occupants inside the residence, including two victims who had been struck by gunfire. Domonic Castillo suffered a single gunshot wound to his forearm. He was treated at a local hospital and later released. Izaac Colunga was critically injured. He was treated at a local hospital upon which time it was discovered that he was paralyzed from the neck down.

The Robbery/ Homicide Unit responded and assumed the investigation with the help of the Forensics Unit. Detectives interviewed several witnesses who provided their accounts of the

event and a few who provided a suspect and vehicle description. Over the past several years, detectives have continued to work the case and up to this point have exhausted all leads.

A press release was distributed regarding the incident in 2019, and rewards were previously offered in hopes of a viable lead.

On September 5, 2023, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 24031 approving a reward in the amount of \$20,000 for information leading to the identification and apprehension of the person or persons responsible for the attempted murders of Izaac Colunga and Domonic Castillo, Police Department case #190006841, for a duration of 60 days.

## **DISCUSSION**

An Anonymous Claimant is eligible to receive payment because the information was provided during the 60-day period that City Council adopted the resolution (September 5, 2023, through November 4, 2023) and although this claimant first provided information prior to the reward, the Anonymous Claimant was aware of a previous reward that was offered, became aware of this reward offer, and continued to provide information during the 60-day period with the intent to receive the reward.

In August 2023, the Anonymous Claimant contacted Detectives Richard Kerr and Karla Beler regarding the attempted murder of Izaac Colunga and Domonic Castillo. The Anonymous Claimant provided vital information on three suspects who were involved in the crime and their motive. Prior to contact by the claimant, detectives had no known suspect(s) on which to focus their investigation. Detectives determined one of the three suspects was already deceased. The Anonymous Claimant continued to give Detectives Beler and Kerr information about the other two suspects resulting in the arrest of one suspect on August 25, 2023, and the second suspect on September 15, 2023. As a result of the information provided by the Anonymous Claimant, a fourth suspect was identified and is currently being sought out of state by the FBI.

It is the Police Department's recommendation that the Anonymous Claimant should be paid 100% of the reward money. The Anonymous Claimant's information was critical to a previously unsolved cold case because it gave detectives specific information on suspects to focus their investigation.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

This item contributes to Strategic Priority No. 2 *Community Well-Being* and Goal number No. 2.4 - Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement, and build public trust.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The Riverside Police Department provides public safety services to the community. Issuing a reward that could positively stimulate the investigation and yield useful information that could possibly lead to the identification and ultimately the apprehension of person or persons responsible for the attempted murder of Domonic Castillo and Izaac Colunga support this goal.

2. **Equity** – The Department provides public safety services to all residents in the City of Riverside. Issuing a reward in an effort to apprehend a person or persons responsible for attempted murder helps in the achievement of this goal by ensuring that RPD employees can enhance community safety.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The Police Department has determined that the benefits of offering a reward in an effort to apprehend a person or persons responsible for attempted murder outweigh the cost of the reward. Additionally, the reward is only paid in the event of an apprehension.
4. **Innovation** – In order to meet the community's changing needs, the Police Department regularly assesses the various tools and programs at their disposal to help them provide public safety services to the community. The rewards program provides the Department with an additional tool to help keep the community safe.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Regularly assessing the Police Departments programs, making changes as needed and utilizing the programs as appropriate allows the Department to adapt and grow as the needs of the community change. The rewards program is a valuable tool that will help the Department provide public safety services.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The total fiscal impact of the action is \$20,000. The funds are budgeted and available in the General Fund, Police-Office of the Chief, Riverside Police Department's Riverside Reward Program Account Number 3100000-459026.

Prepared by: Larry V. Gonzalez, Chief of Police  
Certified as to  
availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer  
Approved by: Mike Futrell, City Manager  
Approved as to form: Phaedra Norton, City Attorney