



**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**DECISION OF THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION**

In the Matters of Brandon Ramos,  
Camden County

CSC Docket Nos. 2026-662, *et al.*

Requests for Interim Relief

**ISSUED:** February 25, 2026 **(HS)**

Brandon Ramos, a County Police Officer with Camden County, represented by Paul W. Tyshchenko, Esq., requests interim relief regarding his immediate and indefinite suspension and continued separation from employment. These matters have been consolidated herein.

As background, the appointing authority served the petitioner with a Preliminary Notice of Disciplinary Action (PNDA) on April 15, 2024, containing the following specifications and seeking his indefinite suspension pending criminal charges:<sup>1</sup>

On April 13, 2024, our office was made aware of an Eye in the Sky video of the homicide that occurred on April 12, 2024 . . . being distributed outside our agency. A copy of the video was sent to this department. A review of the video shows a recording of our Wisenet system remotely being accessed from a cellular phone. The video captures the homicide and tracks the suspect vehicle as they fled the scene. It was determined [the petitioner] was the only one who accessed the Wisenet system viewing all three videos. On April 15, 2024, [the petitioner] reported to his supervisor that he accessed the video, recorded it, and sent it out on

<sup>1</sup> *N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.7(a)2 provides that the appointing authority may impose an indefinite suspension to extend beyond six months where an employee is subject to criminal charges as set forth in *N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.5(a)2, but not beyond the disposition of the criminal complaint or indictment.

a group chat. [The petitioner] copied the video while off duty and distributed the video compromising a criminal investigation.

In conjunction with the above PNDA, the petitioner was immediately suspended without pay. On April 16, 2024, the petitioner, through his then-counsel, waived the *Loudermill*<sup>2</sup> hearing and noted his understanding that there was a pending criminal investigation, which would “take precedence,” and that the administrative case “will be put on hold.” The petitioner requested a departmental hearing “at the appropriate time” and stated that “[a]s we get closer to that appropriate time, I will also be requesting all discovery, including any [internal affairs] investigative reports, police reports, video, audio statements, etc.” On July 7, 2025, the Camden County Prosecutor’s Office advised that it would not pursue any further investigation or prosecution of the incident; that it was closing its file; and that it was remanding the matter for further administrative investigation and action. On or about September 3, 2025, the appointing authority issued the petitioner a “Final Notice of Disciplinary Action” (“FNDA”) whose purpose was, per the appointing authority, to “[close] out” the April 15, 2024 PNDA before issuing another PNDA, discussed below. This “FNDA” noted the following as the “Sustained [Charge]:” “*N.J.A.C. 4A:2-2.5(a)*1 Immediate suspension without pay (An immediate suspension is necessary to maintain safety, health, order, or effective direction of public services.)”

On September 8, 2025, after completing the administrative investigation, the appointing authority served the petitioner with a second PNDA, dated September 5, 2025, which charged the petitioner with conduct unbecoming a public employee, other sufficient cause, and violating various Camden County Police Department rules and regulations, namely Confidential Information, Compromising Criminal Cases, Obedience to Laws and Regulations (Electronic Social Media and Networking), Obedience to Laws and Regulations (Criminal Investigations), Standards of Conduct, and All Other Conduct. The PNDA noted specifications substantially similar to those noted in the first PNDA and sought the petitioner’s removal effective “immediately”:

On April 12, 2024, there was a [h]omicide . . . . [The petitioner] was off duty at the time; however, he received a ShotSpotter notification on his personal cell phone. He then utilized the Wisenet Wave application on his personal cell phone to access and play back the surveillance cameras of the Camden County Police Department, which captured the homicide and the subsequent path of the suspect vehicle as it fled the scene. [The petitioner] then utilized his personal iPhone to screen record the incident and without authorization disseminated that video to a group chat with multiple individuals who are not employed by the Camden County Police Department. [The petitioner]’s reckless actions led to the video being received by numerous other individuals, who are not law

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<sup>2</sup> See *Cleveland Board of Education v. Loudermill*, 470 U.S. 532 (1985).

enforcement officers, including a confidential informant. Furthermore, [the petitioner]’s release of the homicide video without supervisory approval compromised the integrity of the department and a criminal homicide investigation.

In conjunction with the issuance of this second PNDA, the petitioner was afforded the opportunity for another *Loudermill* hearing, which took place on September 24, 2025. It is noted that the record does not indicate that the departmental hearing on the merits of the charges has been held.

In his requests for interim relief, the petitioner requests back pay; immediate restoration to the payroll; and declaratory relief stating that the underlying offense is not serious enough to warrant a suspension without pay, pending the outcome of the departmental charges. He cites *N.J.S.A. 40A:14-149.1*, which provides:

Notwithstanding any other law to the contrary, whenever any municipal police officer is charged under the law of this State, another state, or the United States, with an offense, said police officer may be suspended from performing his duties, with pay, until the case against said officer is disposed of at trial, until the complaint is dismissed, or until the prosecution is terminated; provided, however, that if a grand jury returns an indictment against said officer, or said officer is charged with an offense which is a high misdemeanor or which involves moral turpitude or dishonesty, said officer may be suspended from his duties, without pay, until the case against him is disposed of at trial, until the complaint is dismissed or until the prosecution is terminated.

And in interpreting the above provision, the Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division, stated that “suspensions without pay are precluded for officers charged solely with violations of departmental rules or regulations, except where conduct equivalent to the most serious of crimes involving moral turpitude or dishonesty is supportably alleged.” *Herzog v. Twp. of Fairfield*, 349 *N.J. Super.* 602, 608 (App. Div. 2002). The petitioner argues this standard has not been met in this case. He insists that while depriving him of his ability to work is bad enough, depriving him of his pay in violation of the law is even worse. Further, with respect to the September 24, 2025 *Loudermill* hearing, the petitioner asserts that no evidence against him was presented; no witnesses against him were presented; no legal arguments in favor of the appointing authority’s position were set forth; and no response to the legal arguments presented on behalf of the petitioner were set forth. Rather, the appointing authority merely recited the contents of the PNDA and ruled in favor of itself. The petitioner argues that such a “hearing” was the equivalent of no hearing at all.

In response, the appointing authority, represented by Brandon Hawkins, Assistant County Counsel, highlights that the petitioner is a County Police Officer,

not a municipal Police Officer, and maintains that the instant interim relief request must be denied as the petitioner cannot meet any of the requisite factors. The appointing authority notes that the petitioner is charged with using departmental resources, while off duty, to record a video of a homicide that just occurred and then distributing that video through a group text message to individuals who were not employed by the appointing authority. The appointing authority maintains that the petitioner was not even assigned to investigate the matter on its behalf and that his misconduct fell well short of the standard of conduct expected of a law enforcement officer. The appointing authority insists that it should not be expected to have the petitioner continue to function in a safety-sensitive position and allow him to continue to have access to confidential information. Thus, it contends that it correctly determined that the immediate suspension was necessary to maintain safety, health, order, or effective direction of public services and notes that after its administrative review, it has begun the process of removal. Further, there is no danger of immediate or irreparable harm as the only claimed harm is monetary damages, which may be remedied on appeal with back pay.

## CONCLUSION

*N.J.S.A.* 11A:2-13 provides, in pertinent part, that except as otherwise provided herein, before any disciplinary action in subsection a.(1), (2) and (3) of *N.J.S.A.* 11A:2-6 is taken against a permanent employee in the career service or a person serving a working test period, the employee shall be notified in writing and shall have the opportunity for a hearing before the appointing authority or its designated representative. The hearing shall be held within 30 days of the notice of disciplinary action unless waived by the employee. Both parties may consent to an adjournment to a later date. This section shall not prohibit the immediate suspension of an employee without a hearing if the appointing authority determines that the employee is unfit for duty or is a hazard to any person if allowed to remain on the job or that an immediate suspension is necessary to maintain safety, health, order, or effective direction of public services.

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.5(a) provides, in pertinent part, that an employee must be served with a PNDA setting forth the charges and statement of facts supporting the charges (specifications), and afforded the opportunity for a hearing prior to imposition of major discipline, except: (1) an employee may be suspended immediately and prior to a hearing where it is determined that the employee is unfit for duty or is a hazard to any person if permitted to remain on the job, or that an immediate suspension is necessary to maintain safety, health, order, or effective direction of public services. However, a PNDA with opportunity for a hearing must be served in person or by certified mail within five days following the immediate suspension. *N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.5(a)2 states that an employee may be suspended immediately when the employee is formally charged with a crime of the first, second or third degree, or a crime of the fourth degree on the job or directly related to the job. *See N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.7.

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.5(b) provides, in pertinent part, that where suspension is immediate under (a)1 above, and is without pay, the employee must first be apprised either orally or in writing, of why an immediate suspension is sought, the charges and general evidence in support of the charges and provided with sufficient opportunity to review the charges and the evidence in order to respond to the charges before a representative of the appointing authority. The response may be oral or in writing, at the discretion of the appointing authority.

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.5(c) provides that the employee may request a departmental hearing within five days of receipt of the PNDA. If no request is made within this time or such additional time as agreed to by the appointing authority or as provided in a negotiated agreement, the departmental hearing may be considered to have been waived and the appointing authority may issue an FNDA.

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.5(d) provides that a departmental hearing, if requested, shall be held within 30 days of the PNDA unless waived by the employee or a later date as agreed to by the parties.

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.6(d) provides that within 20 days of the hearing, or such additional time as agreed to by the parties, the appointing authority shall make a decision on the charges and furnish the employee either by personal service or certified mail with an FNDA. See *N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.13 for the issuance of a Final Notice in removal appeals by certain law enforcement officers and firefighters.

*N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-1.2(c) provides the following factors for consideration in evaluating a petition for interim relief:

1. Clear likelihood of success on the merits by the petitioner;
2. Danger of immediate or irreparable harm;
3. Absence of substantial injury to other parties; and
4. The public interest.

Initially, it is noted that the petitioner's immediate suspension under *N.J.A.C.* 4A:2-2.5(a)1 was warranted. It is alleged that the petitioner disseminated surveillance video of a homicide, while off duty and without authorization, to a group chat with multiple individuals who are not employed by the Camden County Police Department; that the video was received by numerous individuals who are not law enforcement officers, including a confidential informant; and that this release compromised a criminal homicide investigation. Clearly, such allegations establish that the petitioner's immediate suspension was necessary to maintain safety, health, order, or the effective direction of public services. In this regard, the Commission is mindful that the petitioner, as a law enforcement officer, is held to a higher standard than are other public employees. See *Moorestown v. Armstrong*, 89 *N.J. Super.* 560 (App. Div. 1965), *cert. denied*, 47 *N.J.* 80 (1966). See also *In re Phillips*, 117 *N.J.* 567 (1990). The petitioner's reliance on *N.J.S.A.* 40A:14-149.1 and *Herzog, supra*, which

interpreted that statute, is inapposite since *N.J.S.A. 40A:14-149.1* technically applies to municipal Police Officers, while the petitioner is employed as a County Police Officer. Nevertheless, it is noted that *Herzog* involved a Police Officer reading a confidential internal affairs document and disseminating it to the newspaper, which led to charges solely for violating departmental rules and regulations. The court found Herzog's conduct did not rise to the level of "moral turpitude or dishonesty" as required under *N.J.S.A. 40A:14-149.1* to support a Police Officer being suspended without pay. Therefore, it ordered back pay from the period of suspension. However, this matter is distinguishable as the alleged conduct is of a different nature, as described earlier, and has the potential to impugn the integrity of the Camden County Police Department and thus arguably involved "moral turpitude," warranting a suspension without pay even if the *Herzog* standard were to be applied here.

Additionally, it is appropriate to highlight at this juncture that when the petitioner was immediately suspended without pay, effective April 2024, he waived the *Loudermill* hearing; acknowledged the existence of the (then) pending criminal investigation, which would "take precedence," and indicated that the administrative case "will be put on hold." The petitioner only requested a departmental hearing "at the appropriate time" and stated that "[a]s we get closer to that appropriate time, I will also be requesting all discovery, including any [internal affairs] investigative reports, police reports, video, audio statements, etc." It is also noted that while the appointing authority issued the petitioner an "FNDA," it is apparent from the record that this "FNDA" did not purport to bring all proceedings at the departmental level to a close. In this regard, the document notes the following as the only "Sustained [Charge]:" "*N.J.A.C. 4A:2-2.5(a)1* Immediate suspension without pay (An immediate suspension is necessary to maintain safety, health, order, or effective direction of public services)." Thus, the immediate suspension that went into effect in April 2024 continued. Further, the appointing authority has effectively indicated that this "FNDA" was merely meant to mark the Camden County Prosecutor's Office's closure of its criminal investigation.

In addition, the information provided in support of the instant petition does not demonstrate a clear likelihood of success on the merits. A critical issue in any disciplinary appeal is whether or not the petitioner's actions constituted wrongful conduct warranting discipline. The Commission will not attempt to determine such a disciplinary appeal on the written record without a full plenary hearing before an Administrative Law Judge who will hear live testimony, assess the credibility of witnesses, and weigh all the evidence in the record before making an initial decision. Therefore, since the petitioner has not conclusively demonstrated that he will succeed in having any administrative charges dismissed, he has not shown a clear likelihood of success on the merits. Further, while the Commission is cognizant of his financial situation, the harm that he is suffering while awaiting the outcome of the administrative proceedings is financial in nature, and as such, can be remedied by the granting of back pay should he ultimately prevail. Additionally, given the serious

nature of the alleged conduct, the public interest is best served by not having the petitioner on the job pending the outcome of any charges.

In conclusion, although no criminal charges were issued to sustain an indefinite suspension, the petitioner's immediate suspension was appropriate and, since the petitioner requested a departmental hearing "at the appropriate time," no back pay is warranted for any procedural reasons. The record also does not support petitioner's restoration to the payroll at this time. Further, as explained above, the Commission declines to order the petitioner's reinstatement pending the proceedings in this matter. However, the Commission reminds the appointing authority that it needs to conduct the departmental hearing on the second PNDA as the petitioner is entitled to more process than a *Loudermill* hearing. Therefore, the appointing authority, if it has not already done so, must proceed expeditiously with a departmental hearing. *See N.J.A.C. 4A:2-2.6.*

### ORDER

Therefore, it is ordered that these requests for interim relief be denied.

DECISION RENDERED BY THE  
CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION ON  
THE 25<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2026




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