

New Bedford canine officer suspended without pay

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2014 Cop Pedophile Jean Gomes

FALL RIVER — New Bedford police officer Jean Gomes, who pleaded not guilty Friday in Superior Court to three counts of indecent assault and battery on a child under 14, has been suspended without pay, Police Chief David Provencher said.

Judge Renee P. Dupuis imposed the mutually agreed upon bail of \$2,500 cash. She also instructed the 58-year-old canine officer to have no contact with the victim.

According to court documents, the victim is a 10-year-old New Bedford resident who is known to Gomes. The district attorney's office has identified her as a female.

Provencher said, as of Friday, Gomes is suspended without pay from the department. The notice, signed by Mayor Jon Mitchell, was being served to Gomes on Friday.

The chief also issued a statement about the incident.

"As you can imagine I am deeply troubled by the allegations against Officer Gomes. Having said that, everyone is entitled to the due process of the judicial system and I will await the outcome of this process before rendering judgment," he said.

"However pending that outcome I have no reservation in saying that Officer Gomes cannot and will not perform any duties as a police for the City of New Bedford until such time as these charges are resolved.

"These accusations involve one officer and one officer alone, and in no way reflect on the fine work and excellent community service performed daily by the men and women of the New Bedford Police Department," he said.

According to the criminal complaint, Gomes is accused of indecently assaulting and beating the victim on different dates and times from on or about Jan. 1, 2011, to on or about July 31, 2014, in New Bedford.

Gregg Miliote, a spokesman for the District Attorney's office, said in an email that he could not discuss the case because the victim is a juvenile and because of the nature of the charges.

The charge of indecent assault and battery on a person under 14 by a mandated reporter carries a 10-year mandatory minimum sentence and a maximum sentence of life in prison, he said.

State law mandates that certain officials — doctors, nurses, social workers and police officers, for example — report cases of suspected abuse. However, it was unclear who actually reported the

alleged abuse.

Prosecutor Maryclare Flynn did not give a summary of the facts of the case at the bail hearing.

Gomes, a 26-year veteran of the New Bedford Police Department, and his attorney, Joseph P. Harrington Jr., each declined to comment when asked by The Standard-Times.

Gomes posted bail and left the courthouse about 10:30 a.m.

Judge Dupuis continued the case until Feb. 25 in Fall River Superior Court for a pretrial conference. A pre-trial hearing in the case is also scheduled for June 16.

Follow Curt Brown on Twitter @CurtBrown_SCT.