

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

SUFFOLK, ss.

COMMISSION ADJUDICATORY  
DOCKET NO. 23-0016

IN THE MATTER

OF

ROBERT AWAD

**DISPOSITION AGREEMENT**

The State Ethics Commission (“Commission”) and Robert Awad (“Awad”) enter into this Disposition Agreement pursuant to Section 3 of the Commission’s *Enforcement Procedures*. This Agreement constitutes a consented-to final order enforceable in the Superior Court, pursuant to G.L. c. 268B, § 4(j).

On March 23, 2023, the Commission initiated a preliminary inquiry, pursuant to G.L. c. 268B, § 4(a), into possible violations of the conflict of interest law, G.L. c. 268A, by Awad. On July 20, 2023, the Commission concluded its inquiry and found reasonable cause to believe that Awad violated G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(2)(ii).

The Commission and Awad now agree to the following findings of fact and conclusions of law:

**Findings of Fact**

1. Awad became a patrol officer in the Sharon Police Department (“SPD”) in February 2022.

2. The SPD is one of many local police departments whose officers work security details at Gillette Stadium during New England Patriots (“Patriots”) football games.

3. On Thursday, December 1, 2022, the Patriots hosted the Buffalo Bills for a game starting at 8:15 P.M.

4. Awad worked the December 1, 2022, game security detail in full SPD uniform.

5. Several weeks before the December 1, 2022, game, SPD Officer John Avelar asked Awad to get him and his friend into Gillette Stadium’s Putnam Club during the game.

6. The Putnam Club is a high-end indoor suite at Gillette Stadium where fans can watch the game from indoors, enjoy upscale food and drinks, and access exclusive outdoor seating.

7. Entrance to the Putnam Club requires the proper ticket and wristband.

8. Putnam Club tickets are available to the general public only as part of season ticket packages, ranging from \$6,000 to \$10,000 per season. The Patriots do not sell single-game Putnam Club tickets to the general public. Season ticket holders may sell their Putnam Club tickets on a secondary reseller market.

9. During the relevant time, Awad was in the one-year probationary period required of all new SPD officers.

10. During the relevant time, Avelar and Awad worked the same SPD shift twice weekly. During one such shift, Avelar was assigned to respond as back-up for other officers including Awad. Avelar also trained Awad once or twice, and offered Awad work-related advice.

11. Awad agreed to help get Avelar and Avelar's friend into the Putnam Club during the December 1, 2022 game ("the game").

12. Avelar did not have tickets to the Putnam Club for the game.

13. Awad knew that Avelar did not have tickets to the Putnam Club for the game.

14. On the night of the game, Awad met Avelar and Avelar's friend outside Gillette stadium before the game.

15. Awad escorted Avelar and Avelar's friend into the Putnam Club lobby. The door was manned by a security team member who checks tickets to ensure guests are in the right place. Awad told the security team member that Avelar and Avelar's friend were "with [him]" and that Avelar was an off-duty police officer. Without showing tickets to the doorman, they proceeded further into the Club lobby to the turnstiles, where a second security team member checks tickets for entry and a third security team member gives out wristbands to guests with proper tickets.

16. Awad also told the ticket checker inside the lobby that Avelar was a police officer, and then escorted Avelar and his friend up the escalator into the Putnam Club.

17. Avelar and his friend did not show tickets or receive wristbands to gain entrance to the Putnam Club.

18. After escorting Avelar and Avelar's friend into the Putnam Club, Awad began to leave the Putnam Club for his security detail post.

19. A security team supervisor, who had witnessed the three enter the Club, followed them up the escalator and caught up with Awad several minutes later. She told Awad that Avelar and Avelar's friend must leave the Putnam Club.

20. When told to help the security team find and remove Avelar and Avelar's friend, Awad asked, "What's wrong, don't you like cops?" and "Why don't you trust me?"

21. Awad then called Avelar on his cell phone twice to let him know that he and his friend must leave the Putnam Club.

22. Avelar and his friend left the Putnam Club within approximately fifteen minutes of their entering the Club, and Awad was removed from his security detail.

23. The SPD investigated the incident. Awad was suspended for three days without pay, losing \$1,094.82. In addition, Awad forfeited the "blue light permit" for his personal vehicle and his SPD probationary period was extended for one additional year to February 2024. The SPD also prohibited Awad from working details at Gillette Stadium "until further notice."

### **Conclusions of Law**

#### *Section 23(b)(2)(ii)*

24. Section 23(b)(2)(ii) of G.L. c. 268A prohibits a municipal employee from knowingly, or with reason to know, using or attempting to use his official position to secure for himself or others unwarranted privileges or exemptions of substantial value that are not properly available to similarly situated individuals.

25. The Sharon Police Department is a municipal agency as defined by G.L. c. 268A, § 1(f). As an SPD patrol officer, Awad is a municipal employee as defined by c. 268A, § 1(g).

26. Entrance to the Putnam Club is a privilege of substantial value as it requires tickets costing well in excess of \$50.

27. Entrance to the Putnam Club on December 1, 2022, was an unwarranted privilege for Avelar and his friend because they did not have the tickets required to enter.

28. Entrance to the Putnam Club without tickets on December 1, 2022, was not properly available to individuals in the same situation as Avelar and his friend.

29. Therefore, by escorting Avelar and Avelar's friend past security and into the Putnam Club while in full SPD uniform and stating that they were "with him" and that Avelar was also a police officer, while knowing that Avelar and his friend did not have Putnam Club tickets, Awad knowingly or with reason to know used his official position as an SPD officer to secure for Avelar and Avelar's friend an unwarranted privilege of substantial value that was not properly available to similarly situated individuals. In so doing, Awad violated § 23(b)(2)(ii).


**Disposition**

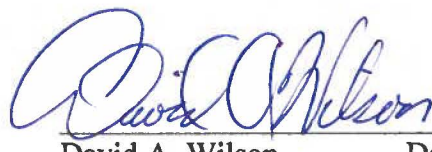
In view of the foregoing violations of G.L. c. 268A by Awad, the Commission has determined that the public interest would be served by the disposition of this matter without further enforcement proceedings, on the following terms and conditions agreed to by Awad:

- (1) that Awad pay to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with such payment to be delivered to the Commission, the sum of \$4,000 as a civil penalty for violating G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(2)(ii); and
- (2) that Awad waive all rights to contest, in this or any other administrative or judicial proceeding to which the Commission is or may be a party, the findings of fact, conclusions of law and terms and conditions contained in this Agreement.

By signing below, Awad acknowledges that he has personally read this Disposition Agreement, that it is a public document, and that he agrees to its terms and conditions.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

  
Robert Awad                      9/12/23  
Date

  
David A. Wilson                      9/28/23  
Executive Director                      Date