

Former Greenfield Police Sergeant Found Guilty in 2017 Crash

Author: mcarey (Mary.Carey@state.ma.us, uid: 30) [STATUS: Blocked]

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A Greenfield District Court jury, on Jan. 27, 2020, found former Greenfield Police Sergeant James B. Rode guilty of motor vehicle homicide by negligent operation in connection with an October 2017 crash that claimed the life of James Arcellana, 29, of Hinsdale, New Hampshire.

Judge Jacklyn Connly sentenced Rode to 2 years in the House of Correction, 9 months of which he must serve, with the balance of the sentence suspended for two years. His conviction also carries a mandatory 15-year loss of license.

Rode, 50, was responding to a call of an erratic operator shortly after 8 p.m. on Oct. 1, 2017, when his cruiser collided at the intersection of High and Sanderson streets with the car being driven by Arcellana. Arcellana died three days later from his injuries.

Massachusetts State Police investigators determined that Rode was driving 84 miles an hour in a 30-miles-an-hour zone just seconds prior to the crash. Witnesses also reported that Rode's cruiser's siren was not activated prior to the crash.

Rode's employment with the Greenfield Police Department was later terminated by then-Mayor William Martin. Rode has appealed his termination to the State Civil Service Commission.

"This was a tragic and avoidable crash that changed the lives of many people on all sides of this case," said First Assistant District Attorney Steven E. Gagne, who prosecuted the case. "We are thankful to the jury for their service, and for carefully considering all of the evidence in this difficult case."