



# SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL

August 13, 2018

Ms. Carmen Y. Best  
Mayor's Nominee for Chief of Police  
Seattle Police Department  
P.O. Box 34986  
Seattle, WA 98124-4986

*RE: Seattle City Council's Letter of Expectations for Chief of Police Carmen Y. Best*

Dear Chief Best:

Over the last several months, you were engaged in a rigorous, national selection process. We are pleased that Mayor Jenny A. Durkan selected you as her nominee for Chief of Police.

This letter is being delivered to you and placed in Appointment File 01057, which contains the materials associated with your confirmation as the Chief of Police. It outlines the City Council's expectations for your job performance.

The City of Seattle's search for a new Chief of Police for the Seattle Police Department (SPD) involved an extensive public engagement process that was tasked with identifying a leader who would work to reduce crime in our communities and neighborhoods, continue to successfully manage Department of Justice reforms, and improve public confidence and trust in the SPD.

The engagement process included 11 community input meetings and captured results from more than 2,600 community survey responses. The process also involved community organizations that serve diverse constituencies and groups with members who may be interested in or directly impacted by policing issues. The interactions captured community dialogue about the status of policing in Seattle as well as the desired personal characteristics and performance expectations for the next Chief of Police. The process resulted in the following high-level consensus of priorities that a leader should bring to the Department:

1. Improve Relationships: SPD's new chief needs to improve relationships between the public and police officers. Many feel the relationship lacks in mutual respect and trust,

and marginalized communities tend to associate interactions with the police with fear, rather than security.

2. Provide Relevant Training: Police officers deserve training that is relevant to issues concerning their job and safety. SPD's new chief must continue to mandate well-developed training with intense scenarios that prioritize de-escalation and other less-lethal alternatives to use of force that improve officer safety and the safety of those with whom they interact. Training should also include emphasis on cultural sensitivity and seeing race through a social justice lens to rid SPD's sworn and civilian employees of their own biases.
3. Collaborate: The public recognizes that police officers cannot fix society's problems all by themselves and therefore must better utilize and collaborate with community partners. Concrete examples of this include working with public and private service providers to assist in dealing with issues relating to mental health crises, substance abuse, homelessness; ability to work with policy and union leaders to advocate for the public's best interests; raising community awareness and participation when it comes to concerns specific to the neighborhood. It is our expectation that the new SPD chief will continue to support innovative programs and harm-reduction approaches, such as Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD), to these complex and intersectional issues.
4. Creative Problem Solving: The public would like to see an approach to policing that seeks effective solutions to addressing the root causes of the public-safety problems confronting our growing City.

*(See City of Seattle Chief of Police Search Process, Community input survey and engagement meetings 2018).*

Many of our policy goals and priorities for the Chief of Police are reflected in the priorities that you described at the Gender Equity, Safe Communities, New Americans, & Education Committee meetings on July 25, 2018, and August 8, 2018, as follows:

- a. Reduce crime and disorder in the City;
- b. Achieve service excellence for the community;
- c. Provide leadership and operate with honor, pride and dedication;
- d. Innovate policing practices, utilize new technologies and establish data-driven policies; and
- e. Utilize best business practices and optimize budgetary efficiency.

In addition to the goals and priorities outlined above, as well as the expectations identified by the extensive public outreach process, this letter describes eleven specific areas in which the Council would like to see considerable progress.

**Expectations for Chief of Police Performance:**

1. **Continue to Strengthen the Department's Training:** SPD has made remarkable improvement in the breadth and quality of in-service training, especially related to de-escalation, crisis intervention, and use of force. The Council asks that you ensure that the ability to minimize and de-escalate conflict be an integral part of the Department's regular annual trainings. We also ask that the evaluation of all patrol officers' performance include recognizing those who demonstrate excellence in managing conflict as well as providing corrective guidance to those who could improve their skills. Finally, we ask that all training be tracked and vetted through the Training Division so that training curriculum is consistent across the department.
2. **Strengthen Misconduct and Supervisor Discipline:** We expect our police officers to always perform their duties in a professional, respectful and fair manner; treating all persons with dignity. When officers are found to have engaged in policy violations or misconduct, there is sometimes evidence of supervisory failure. Supervisors must also be held accountable to achieve a cultural change of reform and accountability. We encourage you to fairly and promptly investigate and appropriately discipline both officers and supervisors, particularly when it involves failures of a more serious nature, including use of excessive force, dishonesty, violations of constitutional protections, ethical violations and behavior that involves discriminatory intent.
3. **Maximize Deployment of Neighborhood Policing Officers:** The ability of the Department to meet increasing and changing demands for effective and constitutional policing is highly dependent on the number of officers it fields on a daily basis. The percentage of sworn officers assigned to patrol is inconsistent with a national best-practice of 60% or more of sworn officers being assigned to patrol. This lack of a sufficient number of officers in uniformed patrol assignments leads to challenges in maintaining response time metrics and meeting the community's expectations of a prompt response to urgent public safety needs. We ask that new officers' assignments be prioritized for patrol and that the Department institute a process to review and prioritize "on loan" and other non-patrol positions so that some officers may be returned from specialized duties to neighborhood policing.
4. **Reducing Crime and Achieving Public Safety Goals:** We expect you to provide leadership in collaborating with criminal justice and community partners in developing and implementing innovative and effective initiatives to reduce crime. The Micro Community Policing Plans (MCCPs) enable SPD to focus its resources and employ evidence-based, best-practice

strategies and tactics to solve recurring and new crime problems. The Council would like SPD to keep its focus on the MCPPs, while continuing to target and apprehend serious repeat offenders. Specifically, the Council would like to see declines in domestic violence, robbery, theft, aggravated assault and residential burglary rates. The Department's focus on the commercial sex trade should continue, especially targeting predators and those who traffic individuals for financial gain. We expect you to formulate initiatives that will lead to reductions in street disorder, particularly problems related to illegal open-air drug markets that plague some Seattle neighborhoods and allow for the victimization of subsistence drug users. At the same time, subsistence drug users and those committing nuance crimes should be directed towards harm-reduction programs such as the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) Program.

- 5. Increase Public Trust in Police and Comply with the Race and Social Justice Initiative:** We ask that you continue to incentivize a culture of transparency and accountability to build public trust and legitimacy in a manner consistent with our Race and Social Justice Initiative. You should continue to engage with groups that have historically seen higher rates of police enforcement and deployment of uniformed officers including members of the LGBTQIA+ community, immigrants and refugees, and communities of color. These communities must know that the Department is seeking the protection and promotion of the dignity of all – especially the most vulnerable.

The Department must proactively promote public trust by initiating positive non-enforcement activities and should continue to track and analyze the level of trust as part of the MCPP work. Finally, the Department should ensure the diversity of Seattle's neighborhoods are well represented in its ranks. This can be accomplished by creating a workforce that represents a broad range of diverse groups based on race, gender, native-language, life experience, and cultural background to improve understanding and effectiveness in dealing with all communities. As a first step, you should establish Preference Points for language in the hiring process as a complement to a broader recruitment effort.

- 6. Maintain Compliance with the Consent Decree:** The City was found in compliance with the Consent Decree in January 2018. Reform must continue through the sustainment period and beyond. Now is not the time to take the foot off the gas. The sustainment period is an opportunity to use lessons learned to ensure even more accountability and transparency in the ongoing effort to increase community trust in the Department.
- 7. Improve Upon Communication and Transparency with the City's Police Oversight Entities:** Having a collaborative relationship between the Department and all police oversight entities strengthens police accountability in a manner that is not possible for each entity alone. The

City of Seattle's accountability system which includes the Office of Police Accountability (a civilian-led misconduct investigation unit), an independent Inspector General for Public Safety, and a strong Community Police Commission can be more effective if the agencies receive the cooperation of Department leadership. We ask that you maintain open lines of communication and unfettered access to department records. The oversight agencies exist not to disrupt policing, but to ensure that policing is performed in a constitutional and transparent manner that protects every Seattle resident.

8. **Extend Community Policing Culture throughout the Department:** The Department should broaden its current community policing approach and build relationships between front-line officers and community members, rather than creating a specialized unit. All officers and supervisors must embrace a problem-solving methodology that is rigorous, data-driven and is designed to empower neighborhood leaders, residents, workers, shop owners, etc. The Department must have a concerted crime-, fear- and disorder-reduction strategy that is executed by officers at every level.
9. **Improve the Quality of Criminal Investigations:** The Department has significantly improved use of data in crime analysis and has created a Real Time Crime Center where sworn and civilian employees identify problems and trends to assist patrol officers and detectives with active incidents and investigations. The quality of the subsequent criminal investigations must be consistent across all detectives and must increase in both thoroughness and accuracy. While many detectives produce high quality work and diligently pursue their cases, the quality across the investigations units could improve. We recommend instituting supervisory standards and regular performance measures, including the number of cases that are ready for the City Attorney to prosecute.
10. **Improve Relations between the Council and Department:** You are expected to maintain a constructive working relationship with Council, as demonstrated by:
  - Prompt and complete responses to Council information inquiries;
  - Proactive updates on policy development, operational concerns, and financial matters of significance so the Council is informed of major changes or controversies;
  - Dependable implementation of formal policy direction provided by the Council; and
  - Assistance in the research and development of Council policy initiatives.
11. **Create Staff Development and Succession Planning Programs:** As the number of officers nearing retirement continues to grow, the Department could benefit from formalized succession planning for senior command positions, creation of a leadership development program for field supervisors (sergeants), and a formal rotation policy for officers and detectives. These programs would allow officers to share and develop skills, build bench strength, and contribute to professional development. These changes must be made to

allow for the continuous improvement in the delivery of police services to the people of Seattle.

**12. Time and Scheduling Systems for on-duty and off-duty employment** - SPD lacks the time and scheduling systems necessary for the management and monitoring of department-generated overtime as well as off-duty employment. These issues have been discussed and wrestled with for several years without resolution. We ask that you address this issue immediately and come into compliance with the City Auditor's recommendations on overtime administration.

Please provide the Council's GESCNA-Ed Committee regular updates on your progress in these areas. These progress updates should be incorporated into the Chief of Police's Annual Report as outlined in Ordinance 108333.

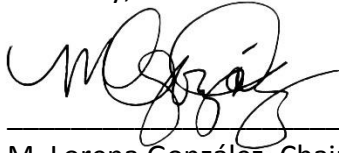
Real community policing is a dynamic process. It is about partnership, participation, and reduction of public fear of crime. It is the ability to implement plans or a system that will bring peace to our neighborhoods and communities as well as excellence in our Department. Real community policing must involve the partnership of every resident, business, organization, department, and community leader in our city.

The Seattle Police Department has many officers and civilian employees who excel in their work and are committed to constitutional, fair and effective policing. The work of these members of the Department does not always receive the recognition and affirmation it may deserve.

Today, you embark on a challenge to bring together the outstanding men and women of the Seattle Police Department with the City's dynamic, diverse and growing communities. Your successful leadership will rely on accessing a common set of shared values, where people genuinely believe that despite their differences they are, together, part of a special City that they can call home. We look forward to supporting you because your success is our City's shared success.

We congratulate you on your confirmation and look forward to working cooperatively with you in your new capacity as Seattle's Chief of Police.

Sincerely,



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M. Lorena González, Chair  
Gender Equity, Safe Communities,  
New Americans & Education Committee



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Bruce Harrell, President  
Seattle City Council

cc: Mayor Jenny Durkan  
Seattle City Council Members