

Public Safety & Community Relations Board
City of Refuge, 401 E. Jefferson St., Bloomington, IL 61701
Wednesday, June 12, 2019; 6:00 pm

1. Call to Order

The meeting was convened at 6:00 pm by Chairman Arthur Taylor.

2. Roll Call

Mr. Taylor called the roll. All members were present.

Staff present: Nora Dukowitz, Chad Wamsley, Greg Moredock,

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Discussion of Bloomington Police Chief Recruitment and Hiring

Chairman Taylor gave background regarding the Police Chief recruitment and hiring process. He also provided ground rules for the evening's interaction, a list of keywords gathered from stakeholders of what they would like to see in the next Police Chief, and posed two questions provided by PSCR board members to spark the community conversation:

Question 1: What does our community need most in its next Police Chief?

Question 2: What would you like to see the next Police Chief add or change in the Department or Community?

Board members made opening comments. Member Fish stated that the Board was present to listen to the public. Member Bosquez stated he would like to see the search for the next Police Chief be local. Member Bennett stressed the importance of a Chief that values community relations and diversity and imparts that on the entire department. He also said he was looking forward to hearing from the public during the meeting. Member Woodard stated he wanted to hear from the public and wanted all the keywords on the sheet Chairman Taylor presented, plus an emphasis on mental health. Member Lancaster stated that the meeting would serve as a listening session.

a. Opportunity for Community Input

The following comments were offered from the audience. The spelling of names is "best guess" based on the commenter's verbalization of their name:

-Camille Taylor: Commented that she was involved with and enjoyed the meet and greet session during Chief's Heffner's hiring. She'd like to see a candidate that is not local as they have no history with the area and might bring other knowledge with them such as expertise in dealing with mental health issues, homelessness, etc. She encouraged that professional and personal references be checked.

-Marty Siegel: Has lived in the community 35+ years and has seen lots of changes. It is a tough time for Police. The next Chief will need to be prepared to deal with issues such as absentee landlords, mental health, and changing technology. Something that is not useful is to simply say,

“We have to fix the culture.” We need someone that makes clear, consistent policies and makes those known.

-Maurice Hill: Lives on the eastside. We need a Chief that values equity and is vetted with diversity training. He described some of his interactions with Police, which were not positive.

-Andrew Hill: Affiliated with City Life and Western Ave. Community Center. We need a Chief with grace, openness. We need someone that visits with local youth and the community. A local candidate would be good.

-Debra Johnson: Unit 5 educator. She noted that only nine of the keywords provided were measureable. How do you measure the rest? She enjoyed the meet and greet during Heffner’s hire and would enjoy something similar during this process.

-Nolton Royceton: Has been in and out of B-N for 40 years. He noted that Bloomington has been stricken badly with crime lately. We need a Chief who knows the community.

-Georgene Chissel: Lives in the Tracy Dr. area and is president of her condo association. She described a time when a car hit her condo complex and the police were called. The responding officer was rude. She believes the qualities of a good Chief need to trickle down to the rest of the department.

-Carla Bailey Smith: The next Chief should be trained in diversity issues and acknowledge implicit bias. The Chief should train all officers in these areas as well as de-escalation.

-Linda Foster: Of the NAACP. She thanked everyone for being a part of the process. The process when Heffner was hired worked well. What’s next in this current process? The next Chief needs to understand that equity doesn’t always mean fair and needs to use a common sense approach.

-Carla Eubanks: Resident for the past eight years. She would like a Chief that meets regularly with community and focus groups.

-Angelique Racki: Agrees that good qualities of a Chief need to trickle down to the rest of the department. Priorities should be diversity training and training for working with those of different mental statuses. The next Chief needs to be in touch with community groups and be able to be both reactive and proactive.

-Rhavi Dhvari: 40 year resident. The next chief should be trained in diversity and de-escalation and understand why the concept of “welcoming city” is important.

-Cinnamon Porter: The next Chief should understand the hurt that the Police cause certain populations and work with the groups that represent these populations. The next Chief should know that the public is here to hold them accountable.

-Rachel Jones: Would like to see a question in the Chief's interview process about use of excessive force.

-Carla Meta Houston: Priorities should be community policing and recruiting more people of color and women.

-Michael Herzog: The Chief should not be afraid of criticism and the tension it may cause. That person needs to be aware that when someone challenges the police, it doesn't mean they hate the police.

-Dustin Underwood: What sort of programs would the new Chief put in place to measure positive outcomes?

-Whitney Underwood: Community policing and prioritized training are important.

-Adam Huhn: Still doesn't understand the process for hiring the next Chief. The PSCRB should encourage transparency in the process, more meetings like this.

The Board encouraged people to continue to reach out with input. Forms for written comments and an email address to send comments to were provided. The board thanked the room for participating and offered closing comments. They will be compiling the feedback from tonight and providing a report to the City Manager.

5. Adjourn (approximately 7:30 pm)

Motion to adjourn was made by Member Rudolph, seconded by Member Bosquez. The motion passed unopposed, and the meeting adjourned at 7:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Nora Dukowitz, Communication Manager