



City of Seattle

Mayor Jenny A. Durkan

June 22, 2018

Dear Community Police Commission:

Thank you for contacting me about the next permanent Chief of the Seattle Police Department (SPD). I appreciate your input, and that you care so much about our City that you took the time to write. I share your deep commitment to equity. One of my first acts as Mayor was to sign an Executive Order that affirmed our City's commitment to RSJI. In addition, all of my cabinet and colleagues in the Mayor's Office (including me) have participated in a full day of RSJI/anti-bias training.

I have worked with and around SPD since 1985 including a series of oversight roles appointed by three Mayors and then as U.S. Attorney where we worked closely with them on many cases. As U.S. Attorney, I saw firsthand the hard and effective work SPD officers do to keep Seattle safe. Yet, nearly seven years ago, in December 2010, I received a letter from the 35 community organizations asking the Department of Justice (DOJ) to open a "pattern or practice" investigation into the use of excessive force by the Seattle Police Department (SPD). As the U.S. Attorney at the time, I was deeply concerned with a series of high-profile incidents involving use of force by Seattle police officers, many against people of color including the shooting death of John T. Williams, a Native American woodcarver.

I worked with community groups — the ACLU, El Centro, One America, Mothers for Police Accountability, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project — to deeply reform the Seattle Police Department and enter into a federal consent decree, which I signed as U.S. Attorney. Because of our work together, SPD has new policies, training, accountability and strict oversight to ensure reforms last. We have seen meaningful changes and lower crime rates. Our police department is making progress when it comes to effectively dealing with people in crisis, de-escalating difficult situations and collecting data so we know what's working. Many people have benefited because of this hard work, and the department is viewed as a national leader on many issues.

Still, there is much work to do. The next police chief will be critical to accountability and transparency and to meeting the Court's Order requiring Seattle Police Department to sustain compliance with the Consent Decree for two years. The next chief also must build a police force for the growing challenges facing our city and our police department. As the fastest growing city in the country, we face new public safety challenges and are asking our police to do more every day as our City and its streets change so rapidly. Our reform efforts must build durable change in culture at the same that we ensure public safety throughout the city.

One of my first jobs as Mayor was to begin our search for the next chief of police. To comply with the City Charter and maximize community input, the search had two initial phases. The first phase was to conduct deep community engagement and to review all candidates to reduce the list to finalists. The

second, as required by the City Charter, was a competitive exam process that was to select three candidates from which I select the final nominee for Chief of Police.

As part of the first phase, I appointed a diverse group of 25 community members to serve on the Police Chief Search Committee. Its members included advocates for our immigrant and refugee neighbors, advocates for criminal justice reform, former and current law enforcement officials and prosecutors, and neighborhood and community voices including that of the CPC. You can read about the full search committee [here](#).

Once formed, the Police Chief Search Committee had a series of meetings. All members were briefed in January by the City Attorney's office regarding confidentiality requirements, the full police search process, outreach plan, and competitive examination process. The Police Search Committee also was required to participate in and complete Race and Social Justice training.

The Police Chief Search Committee undertook an extensive community outreach and engagement process - this was in partnership with one of the leading national search firms who has led many major city police chief searches. My office partnered with the Community Police Commission and 50 community stakeholders to host 14 meetings in neighborhoods across Seattle over the course of two months. We understand that not everyone can attend a community meeting in-person, so we also launched an online survey, available in 15 languages, to help ensure that all our residents had the opportunity to provide feedback on their priorities for our City's next permanent Chief of Police. More than 2,600 people from across Seattle took the survey (an increase from 191 people who took a similar survey in 2014, during the previous search process) and 95 percent of King County zip codes were represented. You also can read the full Community Input Survey and Engagement Report [here](#).

Through this outreach, the members of the Police Search Committee learned that Seattle residents want the next Chief of Police to: hold officers accountable, be able to lead rank and file, serve our changing city, have knowledge and perspective of the history of policing in the US, including racism, bias, and negative impacts of disproportionality; have the ability to build trust and confidence with people across widely diverse communities in a growing city; and work tirelessly and effectively to lead a department that can employ a range of tools to combat crime and ensure the safety of all our neighborhoods.

More than 60 candidates applied from all over the country, including multiple internal candidates from SPD. After a robust community engagement process, numerous community meetings, extensive review of all applicants and their responses to specific questions, and interviews with six candidates, the Police Search Committee deliberated at length about the candidates, and recommended the following five candidates to the Competitive Exam Process: Carmen Best, Interim Chief of Police, Seattle Police Department; Eddie Frizell, 1st Precinct Inspector, Minneapolis Police Department; Cameron McLay, Former Chief of Police, Pittsburgh Bureau of Police; Ely Reyes, Assistant Chief of Police, Austin Police Department; and Jorge Villegas, Assistant Chief of Police, Los Angeles Police Department. These candidates included four people of color as well as one Caucasian.

As the Police Chief Search Committee was informed at the beginning by the City Attorney's office and again at the end of their role, the search then proceeded to the second phase, the Competitive Exam. As required by the City Charter, a police chief "shall be selected by the Mayor from among the three highest ranking candidates in a competitive examination to be conducted under the direction of the Mayor." The Competitive Exam Process then selected the three finalists. The Competitive Exam Process was conducted by: Mike Fong, Senior Deputy Mayor; Shefali Ranganathan, Deputy Mayor, Ron Sims,

former King County Executive and previous Co-Chair to the 2014 Police Chief Search; Ian Warner, Legal Counsel to the Mayor and a former member of the Monitoring Team to the Consent Decree; and Barney Melekian, former Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services under President Obama.

The Competitive Exam Process included the following criteria for assessment, which were reflective of the responses we heard during our community engagement process: the nomination of candidates from the selection committee; a summary of the Search Committee process and views, the recommendations from the Search Committee and its co-chairs, information gathered during the recruitment and selection processes, and written responses to examination questions. Documents from this phase, and responsive records to your letter dated May 27 continue to be publicly available [here](#) and [here](#). The Competitive Exam Process decided on three finalists to move forward to me, as required by the City Charter. This includes: Eddie Frizell, Cameron McLay, and Ely Reyes as the three finalists for permanent Chief of the Seattle Police Department.

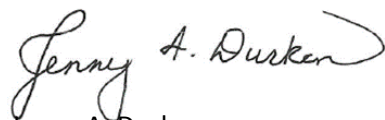
This past week, I met personally with each of the candidates for the first time, and they have started to meet with a variety of community groups, including the Community Police Commission. In addition, we will be conducting extensive site visits to each of these cities and departments where the finalists have served over the next three weeks. As you know, we sought your input on constructing those site visits so we reach deep in communities. The team includes many members of the community. In addition, we invited your Executive Director to participate in those site visits, an offer which was regrettably declined.

The site visits were developed with input from stakeholders and include interviews with a range of community organizations, law enforcement, and other community leaders. Each of those site visits will include meetings with: local branches of the ACLU; NAACP; City Councilmembers; Police Unions; faith leaders; and other key leaders. The final schedule of those meetings will be public once confirmed. In addition, I will be doing at least one interview with each of the candidates in July then making my choice and nomination, which will be subject to Council approval.

As Mayor, I've been incredibly grateful for the work Interim Chief Carmen Best has done and will continue to do for the Seattle Police Department. We have a lot of work to do together in the upcoming months to keep our city safe.

Thank you, and I hope this response helped clarify the selection process. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Ian Warner, Legal Counsel to the Mayor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jenny A. Durkan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jenny A. Durkan
Mayor of Seattle