

Seattle
Community
Police Commission

Our city. Our safety.
Our police. Better together.

May 27, 2018

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mayor Durkan,

You are no doubt aware that there is significant confusion and concern about how three finalists for Chief of Police were selected and announced. A previously unknown litmus test for the position (being an outsider) was announced by one of your selection committee co-chairs at the press conference in which the finalists were disclosed.

Public statements by other members of the search committee and your administration subsequently have pointed to a ranking by the search committee as the mechanism by which the three finalists were identified—yet search committee members, including members of the Community Police Commission (CPC), are adamant they did not rank applicants and would have insisted on a different process if the committee had been asked to select the final three. It is not clear who is even taking responsibility for the identification of the final three candidates, let alone the criteria used. Public statements suggest that highly subjective considerations led to the elimination of the only woman in the field of candidates whom the search committee had already identified as highly qualified.

Equal employment opportunity considerations, together with the need to ensure you retain the ability to choose the candidate who is the best choice for Seattle's Chief of Police after public discussion of the comparative merits of the finalists, require a clearer understanding of what happened and whether it comports with the law, your previously announced process, and the representations that were made to the search committee and the public.

Because there have been mutually contradictory statements about who made the finalist selection decision and how, and because of the degree of concern inside and outside the department about where we stand now, we believe it is important to be as open as possible, as soon as possible, about the selection process to date.

Your counsel, Ian Warner, responded to recent correspondence from the Community Police Commission relating to the Chief of Police selection process generally and the "competitive exam" in particular. We understand from his responses, and from our review of the City Charter, that all records of the competitive exam will become public no fewer than seven days before the Council acts on your eventual appointment of a Chief of Police.

Mr. Warner previously stated that the “competitive exam” referenced in the Charter includes:

information gathered during the recruitment and selection processes; the nomination of candidates from the Search Committee; the recommendations from the Search Committee and its Co-Chairs; the presentation of the candidates to the assessors by the Co-Chairs; and written responses to examination questions.

With this understanding, we ask that the City of Seattle provide the following materials to the CPC and the public. Many of these topics are overlapping, but we err on the side of redundancy in order to ensure clarity and comprehensiveness in our requests:

1. All records relating to the design of the recruitment and selection processes;
2. All records relating to any gender equity analysis or racial equity toolkit applied to the processes, and whether these applied the definition of “racial equity toolkit” adopted by the City of Seattle;
3. Guidance or instruction provided to participants in the selection process, including co-chairs, committee members, and assessors;
4. The identity of all “assessors;”
5. The preparation and presentation to the “assessors” of the recommendation of five candidates that emerged from the search committee;
6. All records relating to the design of the final stage of the process—meaning, the reduction from five candidates to three;
7. All records relating to criteria to be applied or policy viewpoints (for example, that an external candidate was preferred) to be reflected in the selection process;
8. All records relating to the design of the written questions and relating to the administration of the written questions to the final five candidates, including instructions provided to those candidates;
9. The responses to the written questions from the final five candidates; and
10. All records relating to the review and evaluation of the answers to the written questions, including criteria applied to the scoring of their answers, and scores attributed to their answers by the “assessors,” the co-chairs, and anyone else involved in evaluating the answers.

Thank you in advance for understanding the urgency of community concerns and for giving this matter utmost priority.

Sincerely,



Rev. Harriett Walden, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission



Enrique Gonzalez, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission



Isaac Ruiz, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission

Cc:

Council President Bruce Harrell, District 2
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Councilmember Debora Juarez, District 5
Councilmember Mike O'Brien, District 6
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