



Public Safety & Transportation Committee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Wednesday, November 4, 2020

Present: Councilors Downs (Vice-Chair), Lipof, Malakie, Grossman, Markiewicz and Bowman

Absent: Councilors Auchincloss (Chair) and Ciccone

Also Present: President Albright

City Staff: Jonathan Yeo, Chief Operating Officer and Jonah Temple, Assistant City Solicitor

Others Present: Karen Carroll Bennett and NewTV

#434-20 Police Chief Selection Committee by Her Honor The Mayor

HER HONOR THE MAYOR recommending that the following individuals be appointed to the Police Chief Selection Committee in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 5 of Chapter 279 of the Acts of 1992 and Sec. 3-3 of the City Charter:

- (A) Marcela Merino Dominguez, business executive of the City of Newton
- (B) Joshua Levy, attorney
- (C) Judge Paul Chernoff, member of the Judiciary
- (D) Chief William Brooks, Town of Norwood Police Chief
- (E) Hattie Kerwin Derrick, citizen of the City of Newton
- (F) Michelle Leung, citizen of the City of Newton

and recommending that the following individuals be appointed to the Police Chief Selection Committee in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 5 (3) of Chapter 279 of the Acts of 1992 and Sec. 3-3 of the City Charter:

- (G) Officer John Panica, Newton Police Association
- (H) Lieutenant Damien Doucette, Newton Police Superior Officers Association.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation Committee Approved as Amended without the appointments of Officer John Panica and Lieutenant Damien Doucette) 6-0**

Note: Mr. Yeo and Mr. Temple joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

Vice-Chair Downs stated that the docket item reads as if the Committee should approve the recommendations of Officer John Panica and Lieutenant Damien Doucette as members of the Police Chief Selection Committee. The Acts of 1992 clarify that this Committee does not approve these appointments, the appointments are determined by the Newton Police Association and the Newton Police Superior Officers Association.

Mr. Yeo stated that the Mayor has nominated a team for the Police Chief Selection Committee who will review the applicants and assist the Mayor in making her selection for the new Police Chief. The nine-person committee will help narrow down the selection to five to seven candidates to make a recommendation to the Mayor. The Mayor will interview and select the appropriate candidate.

Mr. Yeo stated that the Acts of 1992, Chapter 279 specifies what types of individuals are required to serve on the Police Chief Selection Committee. The Mayor has thought carefully about her choices and has coordinated with President Albright to achieve the right balance in experience and background.

Mr. Yeo stated that the original docket language includes Officer Panica and Lieutenant Doucette to continue the tradition of the Police Unions having a representative according to State Law. Historically, the Newton Police Association and the Newton Police Superiors Officers Association have participated to provide their input on the process which the Mayor believes is very important.

Vice-Chair Downs asked if traditionally the members of the Police Chief Selection Committee candidates appear for interviews before PS&T. Mr. Yeo answered no, historically they do not.

Vice-Chair Downs asked Mr. Temple to clarify for this Committee the voting process to only vote on the first six nominations (letters A through F), and not the police union nominees. (letters G and H). Mr. Temple answered that eliminating nominees (letters G and H) should be clarified in their vote. Vice-Chair Downs then asked Committee members if they would accept and agree to such an amendment. Councilor Markiewicz made a motion to accept the amendment. Committee members agreed 6-0.

Committee members questions, answers and comments.

Questions and Answers:

- A Committee member asked Mr. Yeo if any of the Police Chief Selection Committee nominees have acted in this role in Newton previously? Mr. Yeo answered no, then stated that Norwood's Chief Brooks has lots of experience with this type of process. The City is also working with a consultant, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). The IACP is the leading group in the country and will assist the Mayor and the Police Chief Selection

Committee with recruitment and research. The IACP has a very broad perspective and are a great team who will assist the City in selecting a great candidate.

- What is the most important quality the City is looking for in a Police Chief? Mr. Yeo answered that the Police Chief is a very tough job, especially now during the pandemic. The Mayor is looking for a person with the experience, flexibility and perspective on the future of policing.
- Is it necessary for the candidate to be a Police Officer or can the selected individual be a civilian? Mr. Yeo believes a civilian can also be chosen. Mr. Temple did not know this information. Mr. Yeo said that he would find out if a civilian can be chosen as the Police Chief and will inform this Committee.
- What is the timeline and procedure for the Police Chief Selection Committee process, is the information confidential, is there a public interview process and will they work with the Newton Police Reform Task Force? Mr. Yeo answered that the City's goal is to hire a new Police Chief early next year, when the Newton Police Reform Task Force will have recommendations. It is good timing, there is no exact date when a new Police Chief is to be hired.

Comments:

- It is important that the Mayor puts a high priority of a new Police Chief who is willing to think differently about their role, what their role will look like and their willingness to work with the Newton Police Reform Task Force.

Without further discussion, Councilor Lipof made a motion to approve this item as amended. Committee members agreed 6-0.

#435-20 Police Chief Selection Committee by President Albright

PRESIDENT ALBRIGHT recommending that the following individuals be appointed to the Police Chief Selection Committee in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 5 of Chap. 279 of the Acts of 1992 and Sec. 3-3 of the City Charter:

(A) Councilor Holly Ryan, as the Council appointee

(B) Karen Carroll Bennett, 42 Milo Street, West Newton, as the City Council appointee.

Action: **Public Safety & Transportation Committee Approved 6-0**

Note: President Albright and Ms. Bennett joined the Committee for discussion on this item.

President Albright stated that she wanted to include different perspectives from members of the community whose needs may have been unmet in the past to the Police Chief Selection Committee by choosing Councilor Ryan and Ms. Bennett.

Ms. Bennett introduced herself to the Committee and thanked President Albright for choosing her as a candidate for the Police Chief Selection Committee. Ms. Bennett is a Newton resident, mother of three teenage children who attend the Newton school system. Ms. Bennett stated that she is very active in the City. She is one of the founding members of the Newton Coalition of Black Residents (NCBR) who have been meeting with the Mayor and Police Chief over the past two years. Ms. Bennett also serves on the Executive Board and is the Treasurer of Families Organizing for Racial Justice (FORJ), a member of the Day School Council and a former member of the past Blue Ribbon Commission.

Committee members questions, answers and comments.

Questions and Answers:

- A Committee member asked Ms. Bennett what she hopes to see in a new Police Chief and what policing will look like in Newton? Ms. Bennett answered that the meetings with the Mayor and Police Chief over the past two years have provided great insight on policing and the Police Chief's responsibilities. Ms. Bennett stated it's necessary for a Police Chief to have the respect of the force, leadership not only with officers, but to be thinking of the community and ensuring that everyone feels safe and protected. The Police Chief should be willing to think about reform of policing and benchmarking to other communities and best practices. The Police Chief should be a candidate with good listening skills to make the Newton Police Department stronger.
- Please describe the organization of black citizens. How does the organization relate to the Police Reform Task Force and the Defund NPD group? Ms. Bennett answered that a number of parents, the Newton Coalition of Black Residents (NCBR) started meeting with the Mayor, Police Chief, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to discuss issues important to black citizens such as housing, policing and education. Issues of concern will be brought forward in the future. The NCBR has been creating a real partnership and real trust with each other and the City.

Comments:

- Committee members thanked Ms. Bennett for her willingness to serve on the Police Chief Selection Committee. It was then stated that it is terrific to hear that Ms. Bennett is involved in many ways in the community. Ms. Bennett stated that it will be an honor to serve on the Police Chief Selection Committee.
- A Committee member stated that it is important to have a parent of three Newton school children who will bring that perspective to the Police Chief Selection Committee process.

Without further discussion, Councilor Malakie made a motion to approve this item. Committee members agreed 6-0.

At approximately 7:50 p.m., Councilor Markiewicz made a motion to adjourn. Committee members agreed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Andreae Downs, Vice Chair