

February 6, 2018

James Harpole
Assistant Chief of Police
Milwaukee Police Department
749 West State Street
Milwaukee, WI. 53233

Steven DeVougas
Chairman
Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission
200 East Wells Street, Room 706A
Milwaukee, WI. 53202

MaryNell Regan
Executive Director
Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission
200 East Wells Street, Room 706A
Milwaukee, WI. 53202

RE: Withdrawing Candidacy for Acting/Interim Chief of Police

Dear Chairman DeVougas and Director Regan:

It has been an honor and privilege to have served in Chief Edward Flynn's administration over the past ten years as his assistant chief. It has also been an honor to have served this department and the people of our city for more than 32 years as a member of the Milwaukee Police Department.

Chief Flynn was brought here to be a change agent, and a change agent he was, as he set about initiating key reforms. I had the opportunity to be directly involved in the work of reforming this police department and building it into a nationally recognized model police organization. We have become a police department that law enforcement agencies from around the world have visited to learn about how we police and how we have built internal accountability systems to hold ourselves accountable. Some of our work required us to dismantle and then rebuild areas of the department. That was painful for some, but we are better for it today. One example of this is our former Gang Crimes Intelligence Unit, which was transformed into a nationally recognized Intelligence Fusion Center, housing a real time crime center and a gun crimes intelligence center that uses cutting edge technology to identify the people and places where gunfire is most prolific so that we can build strong cases against trigger pullers.

We have worked hard over the past decade to prevent and reduce crime. The crime numbers are down from historic highs in many areas, such as robbery and theft, which in 2017 both came in at an eleven year low, and burglary which the past three years have seen the lowest numbers recorded in the decade. Although we experienced an increase in gun violence in 2015 and 2016 that mirrors the trend seen in many major cities over the same time period, overall gun violence is trending downward into 2018. It should be noted that six of the seven lowest yearly homicide totals have occurred during the past decade with an average of 102 per year compared to a pre-2008 yearly average of 126.

We have worked hard to hold ourselves accountable by creating the Risk Management Bureau and the Inspections Division. We have trained all of our officers in de-escalation tactics, fair and impartial policing, crisis intervention, Leadership in Police Organizations, trauma informed care, and so much more. This training and the expectation that

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we hold ourselves accountable has resulted in a 77% decline in citizen complaints over the past eleven years, and a steep decline in uses of force—25% since 2013. Our focus on accountability was the reason we set about seeking accreditation for our department, which was a very challenging undertaking, but we successfully accomplished getting our department accredited and in 2018 we will be reviewed by the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Accreditation Group for a three year accreditation renewal.

There will be many challenges facing the incoming interim police chief and permanent police chief. The role of the chief as the public face of the department is certainly important. He or she must be visible and connected to the community. However, in addition to that role, there is a significant administrative responsibility heading an agency with nearly 3,000 authorized employees and a \$300 million budget. It's a very complex organization and the department must be headed by somebody who is experienced in executive level leadership and understands the complexities involved in an organization of this size.

Some of the immediate administrative challenges facing the new chief will be the complex and expansive ACLU lawsuit; the community implementation of Collaborative Reform; the implementation of the new multi-million dollar records management system; the \$8 million upgrade to the body camera system; working through the stalled contract in purchasing for the in-car camera system; the reaccreditation of the department in 2018; managing and allocating finite resources with the current 180 officer vacancies and over 200 civilian vacancies, and so much more. Resource allocation and management will get even more challenging with the potential for up to 220 additional officer retirements in 2018, and the efforts to prevent and reduce crime with this significant reduction of frontline personnel will task whoever is selected for the position.

It became apparent to me during my interview that the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission desires to move in a different direction from the administration of Chief Flynn, therefore, has diminished interest in my candidacy as a sitting assistant chief appointed by him. It is for this reason, amongst others, that I have decided to withdraw my candidacy from the selection process for the position of acting/interim police chief and will be exploring other professional opportunities. I will be retiring from the Milwaukee Police Department with my last working day being February 16, 2018.

I respect the Commission's authority and I am thankful for being selected as one of three finalists.

Sincerely,

James Harpole

Assistant Chief of Police

414-935-7201

james.harpole@milwaukee.gov