

Summary of Input Gathered from the Neighborhoods Commission

On August 12, 2010, the City Manager announced the three part Police Chief Recruitment outreach strategy: (1) Citywide Community Meetings (2) Workforce; and (3) Targeted Stakeholder Outreach. The following is a summary of the comments from a Neighborhoods Commission meeting held on September 8, 2010 in the Committee Rooms 118-120 at City Hall. Approximately 25 attendees participated. The summary of themes and trends is compiled from recorder's notes that were captured during the meeting. It is not a verbatim account of all discussions that occurred at the meeting.

City Manager Debra Figone provided an overview of the process and community outreach strategy and introduced the session facilitator Dr. Shawn Spano. Dr. Spano informed attendees about the purpose of the meeting, and facilitated the discussion using the five questions below. Ms. Figone observed the group's dialogue and answered questions throughout.

Question #1: What are the most important issues that you would like the new Police Chief to address?

Managing Personnel Resources: Commissioners strongly expressed the importance of the next Police Chief having the management experience and a track record of being responsible for a department that has limited resources and budget issues.

Community Relationship: Commissioners shared concerns about the existing policy for Officer rotation assignments and mentioned that the next Police Chief will need to observe and solicit feedback from the Department and residents in order to develop various strategies that address the existing policy issues that concern the community's concerns.

Community Policing: Commissioners continued to express the importance of having patrol officers invested and positively interacting in their communities along with recommending a Police Chief that should foster this sort of philosophy and culture throughout the entire department.

Accessibility: Commissioner suggestions focused on a Police Chief that would have the ability to develop a system that immediately addresses resident concerns, therefore making the Chief consistently accessible and involved in with the community.

Collaboration: Another strong recommendation from Commissioners around relationship building was the ability for the Police Chief to positively balance the needs along with expressing and merging the needs of various partners (e.g. Community, City Council, City Manager, Independent Police Auditor and Police Officers Association).

Leadership: The Commission strongly expressed that the next Police Chief would need to have a positive reputation from their previous assignments in managing relationships/or tensions between the community and department (e.g. use of force).

Public Safety: Another theme that surfaced in the discussion was for the next Police Chief to have a strong background and reputation in strategies that have successfully addressed crime prevention, public safety and creating conditions that ensured the safety of officers.

Management of a Large Department: The Commission repeatedly brought up the importance of selecting a Police Chief that had experience in the management of similar large Police workforce—especially in the areas of budget, personnel and city population.

Question/Comment #2: What experience and track record should the new Police Chief have?

Field Experience: The Commission noted that it was important that the next Police Chief have experience in the field and across multiple sections of the Department. Additionally, several Commissioners mentioned that the Police Chief would need the management skills and a track record for reducing crime in areas such as high tech and gang activity.

Leadership Skills: The Commission expressed the importance of selecting a Police Chief that was flexible, adaptable, innovated, open minded, accessible and had strong communication skills, especially when communicating tough decisions to the community. Additionally, several Commissioners requested that the City Manager carefully review references and receive strong examples of this sort of experience.

Management Skills: Commissioners focused on various examples in this area, noting the importance that the next Police Chief would need to come into the department with a known reputation in order to immediately gain respect from all levels of the department. This would be to create the ability to delegate responsibility and make tough decisions around the budget and other resources.

Transparency: Commissioners mentioned that the City and residents already have a high level and expectation of openness. Given this, the next Police Chief would need be prepared to address and have strategies that foster and model this culture from the management of the department to patrol officers on the street.

Question/Comment #3: What are the most important skills and characteristics the new Police Chief should have?

Cultural Sensitivity: Consistent comments of Commissioners focused positively on the City of San Jose's diverse and multicultural communities. It was noted that it was necessary for the next Police Chief to have strong communication and conflict resolution skills. In addition, it was suggested that the next Police Chief have the ability to manage and ensure that the department has this same background/training throughout all levels of the Department, especially for those Police Officers that have direct contact with the community.

Cultural Awareness: Though selecting a Police Chief has bilingual or multi-lingual language skills was considered important to Commissioners, it was strongly recommended that the candidate would need to have the skills and track record of creating/promoting initiatives that demonstrated the building of strong relationships with various multi-cultural communities.

Strong Character: Another theme noted by the Commission was for the next Police Chief to have a strong character that includes integrity, authenticity, honesty, the ability to listen and to be respectful to everyone. In addition, the ability to be open to learning from the past while moving the department forward into the future was noted as an important trait.

Strong Leadership Skills: Commissioners expressed that the next Police Chief would need to be perceptive, self aware, flexible, and adaptable to different environments.

Question/Comment #4: Is there anything else you would like the City to consider when selecting the new Police Chief?

Workforce Development: Commissioners suggested that it would be important for the Police Chief to invest in ensuring that Candidates had experience in management practices that focused on developing and training talent within the department.

Personnel Management: A suggestion from several Commissioners noted that it was important for the next Police Chief to model leadership and diversity and put this into practice by maintaining a philosophy and culture of the department that focuses on hiring, training and promoting a diverse workforce that reflects the community population.

Visible and Accessible: Commissioners expressed the importance of a Police Chief that attends community events and participates in various activities, stating that this would be a great way for the Police Chief to connect and be accessible to all residents.

Strong Leadership Philosophy: Several Commissioners expressed that it would be necessary to select a Police Chief that had a strong background and track record in change management by expressing and implementing their vision into a new culture. Additionally, Commissioners felt strongly that given that current Police Chief does have a positive relationship in/out of the department, it would be important for the next Police Chief to capitalize and leverage the strengths and success of their predecessor.

Question/Comment #5: What are you willing to do or contribute to ensure the success of the new Police Chief?

Volunteer: Commissioners committed to be active and engage with the new Police Chief and stated that they would volunteer to be resourceful and provide positive and constructive feedback to the Police Chief when necessary. Additionally, the Commissioners stated they would continue leveraging their own strengths and assist in outreach, possibly through facilitating community dialogues.