



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202 • www.city.milwaukee.gov

November 5, 2020

The Honorable,
Members of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners
City Hall

Mr. Tearman Spencer
City Attorney

Honorable Members and Attorney Spencer:

To the members of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners, we write with some urgency to ask that you call a temporary halt to the selection of a new police chief. As is widely known, the executive director of the Commission recently resigned and her chief of staff chose to depart with her. Before that, Chief Morales retired but then filed a lawsuit against the City alleging that he was unfairly treated by your honorable body. For months we have heard public and private reports of dysfunction within the Commission from the level of senior staff on down. Many Common Council members have asked publicly whether there are enough staff members still on duty to perform even the most basic tasks of the Commission, much less to undertake the structural changes in both its own operation and those of the Milwaukee Fire and Police Departments that are so desperately needed.

We wonder who is preparing promotional lists? Who is monitoring the A.C.L.U. settlement? Who is ensuring that our hiring and promotional processes are as inclusive as this community needs and demands? And who is monitoring the complaints of citizens at a time where police-community relations appear to be at low ebb?

The chief you select will be faced with immense challenges. He or she must have the strong support of the community. He or she should not be selected under a deep cloud of uncertainty like that presently hanging over the Commission. There is senior leadership within the Police Department sufficient to manage a brief pause in the process made in the interest of the public good.

And, to City Attorney Spencer, we would ask for your assistance in clarifying the status of the litigation in which the Commission is involved. What is the present status of the A.C.L.U. settlement? Is the City in compliance with its requirements? What is the status of Chief Morales' lawsuit? Has your office made any recommendations regarding its resolution? Should the Commission choose to hire a new police chief, would that limit your office's ability to resolve this matter?

It is to be understood that your briefing may need to take place in closed session.

The current disorder in the operations of the Fire and Police Commission has become a public spectacle that needs to end as soon as is possible. Please know that we stand ready to help to bring it to an end in any way that we can. No chief, however, should be hired under these circumstances; to do so threatens to make a difficult situation worse.

Respectfully,



Chantia Lewis,
Alderwoman, 9th District



Ashanti Hamilton,
Alderman, 1st District



Robert J. Bauman,
Alderman, 4th District



Nikiya Dodd,
Alderwoman, 5th District



Milele A. Coggs
Alderwoman, 6th District



Mark A. Borkowski,
Alderman, 11th District



Russell W. Stamper, II
Alderman, 15th District