

Roanoke Chief of Police Recruitment

Representative Stakeholder Conversations –

As a part of the recruitment of our next Police Chief I have engaged in a series of conversations with various stakeholders in the community. The purpose of the conversations is to assist in identifying the qualities, characteristics and experience we will be seeking for our next Chief. The information gained from these conversations will be combined with the results of the community survey and individual meetings with the Council Members. The following represents the aggregate of what was shared in these conversations.

Conversations were held with the following:

- Chris Levering – Roanoke City Police Association Representative
- Joyce Waugh – Roanoke Chamber of Commerce Representative
- Pete Volisin – Roanoke Diversity Center Representative
- Chris Perkins – Roanoke City Public Schools Representative and former City of Roanoke Chief of Police
- Kate Lewis – Roanoke Neighborhood Association Representative
- Valerie Brown – Williamson Road Business Association Representative
- Pernela Chubb-Wilson – Roanoke Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference Representative
- Tina Workman – Downtown Roanoke Incorporated Representative
- Brenda Hale – Roanoke Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Dr. Elda Stanco-Downey – Latina Representative and Local Colors Representative
- Reverend Kevin McNeill – Pastor Bethany Christian Church and Equal Justice Group Representative
- Dorry McCorkle – Equal Justice Group Representative
- Cathy Shenal – Community Mental Health Advocate
- Sheriff Tim Allen
- 40+ youth in attendance at the Annual Youth Summit – William Fleming High School

Characteristics & Qualifications

The most oft-repeated characteristics/qualifications were someone that is collaborative, genuinely engaged, reflective and has experience in a similarly-sized urban department/community. Other characteristics and qualifications mentioned include:

- Thoughtful
- Articulate
- Good Communicator
- Open-Minded
- Accountable
- Experience in successfully working in a diverse community
- Culturally Competent
- Possession of education and professional credentials expected of a Chief

Important Actions to Focus On

The most oft-repeated actions to focus on were establishing and strengthening relationships with the community and helping address the root causes of crime. Other important actions to focus on mentioned include:

- Focus on crime prevention
- Establishing/Maintaining a strong command staff
- Ensure a diverse and inclusive police force
- Supporting the officers and other personnel that work for the Police Department
- Embraces the role of the community in successful policing and seeks out meaningful ways to engage
- Use of data and evidence-based solutions to address crime
- Maintain outside review when lethal force is used by police officer
- Actively seek out opportunities to establish and strengthen relationships with diverse groups (refugees, LGBTQ+, youth, etc.)
- Elevating the cultural competency of the police force
- Improving the police force's interactions with those with mental health challenges
- Ensure all bias is removed from policing in the community

City Council Members

As a part of the recruitment of our next Police Chief I have engaged in conversations individually with the Mayor and each of the Council Members. The purpose of these conversations is to assist in identifying the qualities, characteristics and experience we will be seeking for our next Chief. The information gained from these conversations will be combined with the results of the community survey and individual stakeholder conversations. The following represents the aggregate of what was shared in these conversations.

Characteristics & Qualifications

The most oft-repeated characteristics/qualifications were someone that is collaborative, engaged with the community and embraces contemporary best practices in community policing. Other characteristics and qualifications mentioned include:

- Thoughtful
- Relationship-BUILDER
- Articulate
- Good Communicator
- Open-Minded
- Accountable
- Experience in similarly (or larger) sized urban environment
- Experience in successfully working in a diverse community
- Possession of education and professional credentials expected of a Chief

Important Actions to Focus On

The most oft-repeated actions to focus on were establishing and strengthening relationships with the community, being a thoughtful and articulate communicator, helping address the root causes of crime and ensuring the City is deploying contemporary best practices in community-oriented policing. Other important actions to focus on mentioned include:

- Focus on crime prevention
- Establishing/Maintaining a strong command staff
- Ensure a diverse and inclusive police force
- Supporting the officers and other personnel that work for the Police Department
- Embraces the role of the community in successful policing and seeks out meaningful ways to engage
- Use of data and evidence-based solutions to address crime
- Empower “front-line” Officers to confront issues
- Identify and lead the Department successfully through any necessary changes in culture
- Maintain an awareness of national and state “conversations” regarding policing and its application/relevancy to local situations
- Elevating the cultural competency of the police force
- Recognize the unique role the Police Chief plays in the community and conduct oneself accordingly

Community Survey

As a part of this initial effort, a community survey was made available on the City's website. As with the stakeholder conversations and the Council discussions, the survey was intended to aid in better understanding the characteristics and qualifications sought by the community for our next Police Chief. The survey also enabled the opportunity for community members to identify what they believe the new Chief should prioritize upon their arrival. The survey garnered over 700 responses from throughout the City. A summary of the responses is provided below and the "raw" survey responses are posted on the City's web site as a separate file.

The survey asked three multiple choice questions and one open-ended question. The three multiple choice questions and their priority responses are identified below. The responses to the open-ended question are included in the separate document posted on the City's web site.

Respondent Zip Codes (706 Responses)

- 24011 (30)
- 24012 (109)
- 24013 (38)
- 24014 (77)
- 24015 (136)
- 24016 (114)
- 24017 (95)
- 24018 (51)
- 24019 (33)
- Other (23)

Question 1 -

What characteristics do you believe are essential that our next Police Chief possess? (700 Responses)

Top 3 Responses

- Trustworthy – 429 (61%)
- Accountable – 343 (49%)
- Open-Minded – 269 (38%)

Question 2 –

What qualifications do you believe are essential for our next Police Chief? (697 Responses)

- Experience with Community-Oriented Policing – 407 (58%)
- Experience in a Diverse Community – 373 (53%)
- Cultural Competency – 279 (40%)

Question 3 –

The three most important actions the new Chief needs to focus on? (700 Responses)

- Seeking Solutions to Underlying Causes of Crime – 388 (55%)
- Support the Officers and Other Personnel that Work for the Police Department – 317 (45%)
- Holding the Police Department Accountable for Actions and Outcomes – 273 (39%)