



270 North Kent Street  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

March 14, 2022

Council President Amy Brendmoen  
Council Member Mitra Jalali  
Council Rebecca Noecker  
Council Member Jane Prince  
Council Member Dai Thao  
Council Members Chris Tolbert  
Council Nelsie Yang

RE: Qualifications for Chief of Police for the City of Saint Paul

Dear Members of the Saint Paul City Council,

As president of the African American Leadership Council (AALC), I am writing to ask and urge you to take a moment to strongly reconsider and rethink the qualifications you are establishing for Chief of Police as your current qualifications will not give the citizens of the city of Saint Paul an opportunity to have all the qualified internal and external candidates have an opportunity apply for the position.

The one thing that the tragic murders of Philando Castile, Jamar Clark, George Floyd, Daunte Wright and another 119 young black women and men who have been murdered locally, regionally and nationally have taught us that we need immediate **transformation, transparency and reform** in policing to make diversity, inclusion and equity a reality in the department. **The most important thing is we cannot continue to do things the same way as we did them in the past as to say that we are in different times when it comes to policing is an understatement in our city and this nation.**

You are currently proposing that the following qualifications:

- Four years of administrative level experience, assistant chief, deputy chief or equivalent rank of Saint Paul police commander in an organization of at least 500 officers.

**Response: With this qualification you are saying that there are no qualified African Americans for the position with the exception of DPS Commissioner John Harrington and DPS Assistant Commissioner Booker Hodges (new Bloomington Chief of Police). Many qualified African American men and women who will not qualify for the position based on this qualification includes, but is not limited to Roger New, Eagan Chief of Police, Blair Anderson Saint Cloud Chief of Police, Suwana Kirkland former RCSO Commander, Dakota County Director of Corrections and candidate to become the Hennepin County Sheriff, SPPD Commander John Loretz, SPPD Commander Salim Omari and many other qualified candidates locally, regionally and nationally.**

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- Bachelor's degree, with a master's degree preferred. Advanced training, such as the FBI National Academy.

**Response: I can agree with the Bachelor's degree and with a Master's degree being preferred, but I believe an individual with a Master's degree and FBI National Academy or similar advanced training should be more than qualified for the position thus be given credit for their education and advanced training making them qualified to be a candidate for the position.**

- Must have a proven record of success working in a racially diverse community, commitment to increasing diversity in the department and developing strong labor-management collaboration.

**Response: I believe in 2022 that this is the most important qualification for this position and should be moved to the top of the list as the Chief of Police of the Saint Paul Police Department must be able to work with the African American community and all communities. I again urge you to not think about policing as it was when we hired Finney, Smith, Harrington and Axtell who were all great chiefs of police. The Chief of Police has to have the trust of the African American community and other communities as her/his number one priority should be our community and building a trusted and respectful relationship with our community. A new Chief of Police will have an Assistant Chief, Deputy Chiefs, Sr. Commanders and Commanders to deal with and supervise major crimes, patrol, gangs and the rest of the important work of the department. She/He must be a "Drum Major" for freedom, justice, equality, inclusion and diversity in the department and on the streets of Saint Paul. To only allow someone with four years in a department of 500 plus officers is saying that your commitment to diversity, inclusion and equity is NOT REAL AND HAS NEVER BEEN REAL. A former mayor of the great city of Saint Paul once said to me that the most important thing when hiring a Chief of Police is that we have all the best candidates apply for the position. That does not mean that they will get the position, but they get to apply for the position as they then will have a chance to possibly get the position and make the hiring process better for all candidates. The size of the department does not make you the best candidate to be Chief of Police for the city of Saint Paul no more than having four years in a senior administrative position makes you the best candidate.**

As I have watched television the past few weeks there have been several commercials regarding what a white man makes in the same job as an African American female or male even though the African American candidates were more qualified. There have been several commercials before and during Black History Month with sports teams with EQUALITY AND NO RACISM on the back of their uniforms. This is not the "Dream" that Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. had for the city of Saint Paul or our nation in 2022. Our history in the city of Saint Paul has shown us that when we want to make the "Dream" a reality for us we will change the requirements to benefit us. Just as the city of Saint Paul did when we hired former SPFD Chief Tim Butler to be Fire Chief when he had never been a fireman and unqualified for the position. We were the only city in the nation to have a Fire Chief that had never been a fireman thus why we sent him out of state at the expense of the city to go through a fire academy. I am not asking you to hire anyone unqualified again, but to give qualified candidates an opportunity for the position.

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The AALC and organizations like the Saint Paul Black Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance and the Saint Paul Branch of the NAACP have more contact with the Chief of Police than any of other city official and especially over the past four years. The African American community is the most victimized community in the city of Saint Paul by the police department and by our own people. The African American community is the most likely to have police involved allegations of excessive force, police shootings and God forbid, but another killing in our community. This is why having a person in the Chief of Police position who is best qualified to have a partnership with our community and all communities is so extremely important to our three organizations.

In closing, you have a great opportunity to go down in history as change agents who decided to think outside the box and change the qualifications for Chief of Police as it is not too late. The changes that I am asking for will not exclude anyone, but will make the pool of qualified candidates inclusive, equitable and diverse giving you as our elected leaders and the hiring panel an opportunity to hire the next great Chief of Police who can deliver **“Trusted Service with Respect”** to our community and all communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email or on my cell phone at 651-470-0266 as I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this letter with any of you and leaders from out three organizations.

Peace and Blessings,

*Tyrone Terrill*

Tyrone Terrill, President  
African American Leadership Council

**“PLEASE STAY AT THE TABLE”**