



Austin Police Chief Public Engagement Process

Executive Summary Report

GovHRUSA was hired by the City of Austin to facilitate the public engagement process with respect to the possible appointment of Interim Police Chief Brian Manley as Austin's next Chief of Police. The information gathered from the community surveys, online feedback, community forums and interview panels will be reviewed by City Manager Spencer Cronk. This information is designed to assist the City Manager on either filling or expanding the recruitment for the vacant Police Chief position.

The City of Austin provided multiple opportunities for community feedback. The following is an outline of those opportunities and the number of responses:

May 7 Town Hall Community Meeting – Held at the Turner Roberts Recreation Center.

Approximately 150 people attended, 29 questions were asked from the audience and four written feedback forms were completed. This meeting began with the Austin Quality of Life Commission outlining their perspectives on key characteristics for the next Chief to possess, immediate challenges facing the department and community that need to be addressed and future issues that need to be addressed. Interim Chief Manley gave an overview of his background and his vision for the department. Those present submitted questions to be asked and also were able to directly ask questions of Interim Chief Manley. Feedback forms were provided for those who wished to provide additional thoughts. Those are included in the full report.

May 17 Town Hall Community Meeting -- Held at the KLUR Studio and was taped for rebroadcast. Approximately 125 people attended; a total of 42 questions were posed directly to Interim Chief Manley over a two hour time period. The questions came from the audience; from twitter/text to Moderator Judy Maggio; and prerecorded questions from earlier in the day. Three written feedback forms were collected and one letter which are in the full report along with the questions asked and the Interim Chief's responses.

May 15 Panel Interviews

On Tuesday, May 15, 2018, Interim Chief Manley interviewed with three panels comprised of the following individuals:



Quality of Life Panel

Austin LGBTQ – Kathryn Gonzales
 Hispanic/Latino – Jill Ramirez
 African American – Kenneth Thompson
 Asian American – Richard Jung
 Human Rights Commission – Sukyi McMahon

Chamber of Commerce/Public Safety Commission

Crime Commission – Cary Roberts
 Austin LBGT Chamber -- Edgar Gierbolini
 Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce -- Luis Rodriguez
 Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce -- Mike Rollins
 Greater Austin Asian Chamber of Commerce – Ali Khataw
 Greater Austin Black Chamber of Commerce – Tam Hawkins

Community Panel

Colony Park Neighborhood Association – Barbara Scott
 Austin Justice Coalition – Chas Moore
 Grassroots Leadership – Chris Harris
 LULAC – Frank Ortega
 Austin Neighborhood Council - Jeff Jack
 Austin Justice Coalition – Kathy Mitchell
 ACLU – Matt Simpson
 Measure Austin – Meme Styles
 NAACP – Nelson Linder
 Austin Urban League – Quincy Dunlap
 Interfaith Action of Central Texas – Simone Talma
 PODER-ANC – Susana Almanza
 Baptist Ministers Union – Pastor Anthony Hays

Each panel spent approximately 90 minutes interviewing Interim Chief Manley. The interviews began with the same four questions which on average lasted 20 minutes. Panel members then asked their own questions for the balance of the time. The Quality of Life Panel asked 15 additional questions; the Chamber of Commerce/Public Safety Commission Panel asked 19 additional questions; and the Community Panel asked 32 additional questions. Following the questions and answers, each panel discussed the strengths and areas of concern with respect



to Interim Chief Manley's possible appointment as Austin's next Police Chief. GovHR President Heidi Voorhees was present for all of the interviews along with representatives from the City Manager's Office and the Human Resources Department. Ms. Voorhees took notes on the questions, answers and feedback which are included in the full report.

Panel Interview Feedback

Each panel was asked to focus on the strengths and areas of concern following their interview with Interim Chief Manley. The following is a summary of the comments. All of the comments can be found in the full report.

Quality of Life Panel – Strengths and Areas of Concern Summary

The Quality of Life Panel members cited Interim Chief Manley's openness to hear from the community, his well-rounded knowledge of the City and the department, and his willingness to hold himself and the department accountable. It was noted that he is not defensive about issues and is someone they can work with. Panel members noted concerns with whether or not he has an urgency to make bold changes. It was further commented that he was willing to accept a contract that limits him and civilian oversight.

Chambers of Commerce/Crime Commission Panel – Strengths and Areas of Concern

The Chambers of Commerce/Crime Commission Panel cited Interim Chief Manley's connectedness and engagement with the community as important strengths. He is trusted by the community and wants to grow his relationships with the community. He sees the department's challenges and does not gloss over them. The panel also noted that he will allow the community to change his mind. The Panel cited the need to hire more women.

Community Panel – Strengths and Areas of Concern

The Community Panel saw Interim Chief Manley as a man of conviction and honor who will stand by his word. They felt it was an asset that he grew up in Austin and is open to Austin's diverse communities. He is personable, charismatic, inclusive and does not shy away from the hard questions. They also mentioned that he will backtrack when he is wrong. As for concerns, the Panel noted he is more progressive but wondered if he is transformational. They were also concerned that he was a part of the executive team when some of the issues with the DNA Lab



were going on. A few panel members commented that they would not know if he is the best for the position without a national search.

On Line Survey Results – 347 responses

The Public Information Office collected data from an on-line survey that asked the following questions: 1) What are the key characteristics you think we need in our next Chief of Police? 2) What do you believe are the key challenges that need to be immediately addressed by the next Chief of Police? and 3) What issues do you believe the Austin Police Department must be prepared to address over the next five years?

Though the questions of strengths or areas of concern for Interim Chief Manley were not the questions asked in the survey, many respondents commented on those items. Sixty-eight (68) respondents directly advocated for the appointment of Interim Chief Manley as Austin's next Chief citing his calm leadership under pressure, his honesty and integrity, his compassion and his communication skills.

Six (6) respondents specifically noted areas of concern with Interim Chief Manley including his response on racial disparity at one of the town hall meetings, a need for more transparency regarding the bombings and an us vs. them police department mentality. Another respondent indicated a desire for a new perspective on operating the City's police department.

311 Report – 66 Responses

The City of Austin's Public Information Office received comments from the City's 311 center. The following questions were asked: 1) What are the key characteristics you think we need in our next Chief of Police? 2) What do you believe are the key challenges that need to be immediately addressed by the next Chief of Police? 3) What issues do you believe the Austin Police Department must be prepared to address over the next five years?

Again, respondents were not asked about strengths or areas of concern with respect to Interim Chief Manley. Forty-two (42) respondents supported his appointment as Austin's next Chief. They cited his proven leadership, experience, honesty, care for the community and his knowledge of Austin. Two respondents indicated they did not support Interim Chief Manley for the permanent position, one desired a broader search and the other thought a person of color should be appointed.



Our Next Chief Email Responses – 271 Responses

The Austin Public Information office established a dedicated email and received feedback on the following questions: 1) What are the key characteristics you think we need in our next Chief of Police? 2) What do you believe are the key challenges that need to be immediately addressed by the next Chief of Police? 3) What issues do you believe the Austin Police Department must be prepared to address over the next five years?

Again, respondents were not asked to weigh in on the strengths or areas of concern with respect to Interim Chief Manley. Of the 271 responses, 180 specifically indicated support for Interim Chief Manley to be appointed as Austin's next Chief. They cited his performance as Acting Chief, his honesty, leadership, integrity, transparency, professionalism and empathy.

There were also 50 individual emails that were identical in their content. These emails outlined critical policing issues facing Austin and other cities across the country as well as a list of reforms the next Chief must commit to support and/or implement. All of the 50 emails also said the following:

To address these issues, we expect that the next Police Chief will implement significant changes. The status quo simply won't do. Having only one month and two carefully curated community forums during which to engage a single candidate is insufficient to properly vet whether these issues will be addressed satisfactorily, or at all, by the next Police Chief. Austin is the 11th biggest city in the United States and this community expects that its leadership will perform their duties with the professionalism befitting a city of our size. That includes conducting a thorough and transparent Police Chief search to ensure that the very best candidates apply with the knowledge that they have a legitimate opportunity.

Ten (10) respondents did not favor the permanent appointment of Interim Chief Manley citing issues at the Police Academy, general training issues and the need for a full commitment to uprooting racism in the Austin Police Department. One respondent indicated support for Interim Chief Manley but thought a full search should be conducted.

Community Leader Feedback – 10 Responses

Targeted emails were sent to a variety of community leaders who regularly interact with Interim Chief Manley. The respondents cited Interim Chief Manley's strengths as a trusted and focused leader who is greatly respected by all segments of Austin's diverse community. They



also cited his openness and accessibility as well as his steady and strong demeanor during times of crisis. They further noted his impeccable integrity and his innovation and collaboration. Areas of concern included his need to diversify the upper ranks of the department and the Training Academy and his need to further collaborate with other public safety agencies. The complete content of this feedback is in the full report.

Emails Sent Directly to City Manager Cronk's Office – 222 (Unsolicited) Responses

The City Manager's Office received 130 emails specific to the appointment of the next Police Chief. Of those, 127 supported the appointment of Interim Chief Manley the leadership, professionalism and community engagement he has shown as the Interim Chief as well as throughout his career.

In addition, the City Manager's Office received a letter of support for the permanent appointment of Interim Chief Manley signed by 59 graduates of the 94th and 95th Citizens Police Academy and other supporters; a letter of support for the permanent appointment of Interim Chief Manley from the Greater Austin Crime Commission and from 28 business, community and faith leaders. Several individual letters of support were also sent in.

Again, all of the emails and letters are viewable in full in the attached report.

Concluding Comments

The City of Austin has conducted an extremely thorough public engagement process to obtain feedback and comments from the Austin community regarding what characteristics they would like to see in the next Police Chief and the short and long-term challenges they believe are facing the department. In addition, the Austin community was given the opportunity to meet and/or engage with Interim Chief Manley to understand his background and vision for the department and his perspective on the challenges facing the Austin Police Department and policing in general. Respondents could attend two Town Hall meetings, email in their comments to a dedicated email (Our Next Chief); respond to an on-line survey or call in their comments/responses to the survey to the City's 311 Center. At the Town Hall meetings participants were able to submit questions, send in questions via text or directly ask questions to Interim Chief Manley. The second Town Hall meeting was two hours of direct questioning of Interim Chief Manley by audience members as well as those who submitted questions via text or pre recorded earlier in the day. The Town Hall meetings were either taped for rebroadcast or broadcast live allowing for the community to observe the questions and answers.

Though the question was not asked in the on-line surveys, many respondents chose to indicate whether or not they support the permanent appointment of Interim Chief Manley. A significant majority of those that chose to weigh in support the permanent appointment of Interim Chief Manley. They cite Interim



Chief Manley's honesty, integrity, experience, knowledge of Austin and engagement with the community as reasons why he should be appointed Austin's next Chief of Police. A much smaller number did not favor Interim Chief Manley's permanent appointment because they either believe there should be a national search for Austin's next Police Chief or have concerns about Interim Chief Manley's ability to lead the department into the future.

Interim Chief Manley also went before three different panels that represented a cross section of community stakeholders. The majority of those supported his appointment to the permanent position citing his leadership, honesty, integrity and willingness to work with them. Several participants also pointed out that Interim Chief Manley is willing to admit when he is wrong and noted that the community has changed his mind, which they believed was a sign of a good leader they could work with. A number of panel members indicated that while Interim Chief Manley may be progressive, he may not be transformational in his leadership of the Austin Police Department.

The City of Austin is known for its extensive and varied public engagement efforts and this process was no exception. Whatever the outcome, the responses to the three survey questions as well as the other feedback provided are valuable information for Austin's next Police Chief to utilize in leading the city's public safety operations.

I am available to further discuss this report at your convenience. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the City of Austin in this important effort.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Heidi Voorhees'.

Heidi Voorhees
President, GovHRUSA

(Attached: Appendix A)



APPENDIX A

Summary of All Responses

Engagement Activity	People Attending	# Questions Asked	# of Feedback Responses
May 7 Town Hall	150	29	4
May 17 Town Hall	125	42	4
May 15 Panel Interviews	24	66	9 on line responses*
On Line Survey			347
311 Report			66
Our Next Chief Emails			271
Community Leader Feedback			10
Emails/Letters to City Manager's Office			222
Total	299	137	933

*All panel members participated in the feedback deliberations. Nine also contributed on line.