

ERIC JOHNSON
Mayor of Dallas



December 9, 2020

Councilwoman Jennifer Gates
Chair, Public Safety Committee
1500 Marilla Street, 5FN
Dallas, Texas 75201

Sent via email: jennifer.gates@dallascityhall.com

Dear Chairwoman Gates:

I believe you would agree that public safety is our city's top priority, and that few decisions are as vital for the people of Dallas as the hiring of our city's next police chief.

As we have discussed, after reading your December 4, 2020, memorandum and the city manager's December 8 update on the police chief search process, I wanted to express to you some concerns of mine, which I hope you will address in your capacity as the chair of the Public Safety Committee:

- 1) I believe members of the City Council should have the opportunity to ask questions of the city manager about the search process in a public setting. I am particularly interested in how the panels, which are made up of our constituents, were determined and how their feedback will be considered. My preference would be a legislative-style hearing of your committee to facilitate this discussion.
- 2) The public, likewise, should have an opportunity to ask questions and weigh in on the finalists. While the hiring decision remains up to the city manager, public forums are important to other cities' police chief searches. The next police chief will need to capably partner with and answer to the public and the City Council on a regular basis, and I believe more public input would be beneficial for the process. My personal preference would be allowing the public to speak at the aforementioned legislative-style hearing, during which City Councilmembers can also directly ask questions of the finalists on behalf of their constituents. Pre-recorded videos preclude follow-ups, and they could prove awkward and less revealing than we would hope.
- 3) While I was pleased to see a summary of the responses to the public input survey, I would like for the City Council and the public to have access to the full survey results, including the raw responses to question 11. This will allow City Councilmembers and the public to view the responses by ZIP code and by demographic information. It will also

allow our colleagues to read the unfiltered feedback of our constituents. I believe it is important for the transparency of this process, and for the understanding of the public, for this information to be released in full.

While the city manager has the final say in all matters pertaining to this search, I believe it is important, as the sole citywide elected official, to share my concerns and hopes with you on behalf of the people of Dallas. As I have expressed both publicly and privately, I believe it is critical that the city manager get this decision right, and that he focus on the needs of the people of Dallas above all other considerations.

Thank you for your consideration, and I encourage you to consult with me if you have any questions.

I look forward to working with you, the Public Safety Committee, the city manager, and the next police chief to reduce violent crime. Together, we can commit ourselves to making Dallas a safer city in 2021 and in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Johnson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Eric Johnson
Mayor of Dallas