



Legislation Text

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 18, 2022

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES F. PARAJON, CITY MANAGER /s/

FROM: DANA WEDELES, STRATEGIC INITIATIVES OFFICER, CMO

DOCKET TITLE:

Consideration of the Appointment of the Independent Policing Auditor/Investigator.

ISSUE: Consideration of the appointment of the Independent Policing Auditor/Investigator.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council:

- (1) Move to appoint Kim Neal to the office of the Independent Policing Auditor/Investigator effective December 1, 2022; and
- (2) Authorize the mayor to execute an employment agreement with the Independent Policing Auditor/Investigator on behalf of the City.

BACKGROUND: On June 9, 2020, City Council adopted Resolution 2950, that stated Council's intent to establish a Community Policing Review Board. The resolution directed the City Manager and City Attorney to return to Council on September 8, 2020 with a proposed ordinance to establish a Community Policing Review Board in Alexandria, and Council has continued the discussion following this initial draft.

At City Council's April 2021 Public Hearing, City Council voted unanimously to adopt an ordinance establishing the structure of a new Independent Community Policing Review Board, to be effective as of July 1, 2021 along with its authorizing state law. The ordinance grants this board the authority to:

- Receive concerns from the community regarding policing in Alexandria;
- Review Alexandria Police Department investigations of certain incidents and complaints and issue advisory findings;
- Conduct independent investigations of certain incidents and complaints of more serious incidents, as defined in the ordinance, and issue advisory findings regarding these incidents; and

- Consider and make recommendations on policing practices, policies and procedures.

The ordinance also establishes a new City Council appointed position known as the Independent Policing Auditor/Investigator to staff this new review board.

DISCUSSION: In February 2022, the City hired a recruitment firm, Polihire, to conduct a nationwide search for an Independent Policing Auditor/Investigator. Polihire identified four candidates. The Independent Police Review Board and a City Staff panel separately conducted interviews during Summer 2022. City Council members then conducted interviews of the top candidates and selected Kim Neal for the position.

Ms. Neal is currently the Police Monitor in the City of Fort Worth, Texas, a role she has been in since March 2020. As the first Police Monitor, Ms. Neal established the Fort Worth Office of Police Oversight to provide oversight and accountability of the Fort Worth Police Department. In this role, Ms. Neal led efforts to audit body-worn camera footage and use-of-force polices, conducted regular community engagement activities to identify solutions for how to improve police-community relations, and identified patterns and trends of citizen complaints and incidents.

Prior to this role, Ms. Neal was the Executive Director for the Citizens Complaint Authority in Cincinnati where she oversaw the investigations of serious misconduct allegations by Cincinnati police officers including, but not limited to, shots fired, deaths in custody, use of force, and improper procedures, with the ultimate goal of addressing residents' concerns and improving residents' perceptions of the Cincinnati Police Department.

Ms. Neal also held other senior-level positions in other major cities in the areas of policy, employment, higher education, compliance, ethics, privacy, and information disclosure in the public sector at different levels of government, and in the private sector in the fields of utilities, government contracting, and legal. Ms. Neal previously served as professor of legal studies at the University of Maryland University College in Adelphi, Md.

Ms. Neal earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from Georgetown University and juris doctorate from University of Baltimore School of Law. In addition, she has certifications in compliance and ethics.

Ms. Neal is a volunteer Court-Appointed Special Advocate in Hamilton County, Ohio. She is an active member of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, Ethics and Compliance Initiative and Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

STAFF:

Dana Wedeles, Strategic Initiatives Officer, City Manager's Office
Meghan Roberts, Deputy City Attorney, City Attorney's Office
Robert Porter, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office