

City of Oakland Community Input Meeting Notes
Police Chief Recruitment Input Session— Community Policing Advisory Board
(CPAB) Meeting, Wednesday, November 6, 2013

The following is a summary of the comments from the Community Policing Advisory Board (CPAB) Meeting for the Police Chief Recruitment held on Wednesday, November 6th in City Hall. The summary is compiled from staff notes. It is not a verbatim account of all discussions that occurred at the public meeting.

Question#1: What are the most important issues/priorities that you would like the new Police Chief to address?

- Focus on the small crimes and not just large ones. Robbery and burglary may lead to career criminals, as they could gain confidence in crime and become more brazen
- Bring stability to the Problem Solving Officers (keep officers in beats for longer periods)
- Change the perception of Oakland (not all people that live in Oakland are victims or criminals, and all officers are not bad)
- Continue the current chief's effort to get patrol officers out of their cars and interact/engage with the community; this helps enlist trust while getting information from the community
- The new chief should have a vision of one Oakland, stop the reality or perception of inconsistent service levels in various Oakland neighborhoods
- OPD should respond to robberies and burglaries consistently throughout the city
- Gain more credibility. Resolve the Negotiated Settlement Agreement, it's been going on for too long.
- Include the community in the cadet/training process and increase community involvement in officer training
- Encourage Oakland residents to become officers

Question #2: What experience and track record should the new Police Chief have?

- Someone who has dealt with/worked in a city with high crime rate—not someone from a city with low rate or no crime
- Chief able to work with the community, and the community able to work with him/her
- Someone who's dealt with issues like Occupy Oakland or protest / free speech events
- Someone who understands the repercussions of firing a gun at a person
- Choose their own leadership team w/ sound judgment about those around him/her
- Someone who was a police chief for a comparable city 5+ years, looking for stability and longevity, not a rock star mentality, appreciate Chief Whent's experience in IA
- Experience leading a department, improving morale, "being a good leader"
- Technology skills and savvy, able to adopt and adapt
- Important that his/her life experiences reflect/match some of the realities of Oakland
- Look for candidates that have had experience in cities with a waterfront/port & airport
- Someone who is familiar with the Comstat model, geographic/area policing models

Question #3: What skills and characteristics are the most critical for a new Police Chief to succeed in Oakland?

- Patrol background that came up through the ranks; not just admin experience
- From a similar diverse metropolitan city background, not a small town person
- Someone from Oakland, or someone familiar with Oakland
- Speak a language other than English, be multi-lingual
- Not a fair weather chief, a wartime chief
- Ability to navigate the political environment
- Preference for a woman
- Able to make decisions and take responsibility/handle repercussions of decisions
- Not afraid to stand alone and stand up for what is right
- Must have some ideas/solutions, think outside the box, and have a strong character
- Must be “magical,” do a little bit of everything
- Strong people skills, open, friendly and smiling, e.g., HoJo knew employees’ names, etc.
- Someone who’s going to stay here long enough to make a difference
- Must consider the viability of person staying here for longer than a year or two, not someone who uses Oakland as a quick stepping stone. Instead someone mature enough to lead, yet young enough to still have passion about the job.
- Someone who’s a good manager, who will work on the backlog

Question #4: Is there anything else you would like the City to consider when selecting the new Police Chief?

- Chief Batts took time to walk the neighborhoods in civilian clothes, observing and experiencing Oakland, perhaps have candidates do this before they accept job so they understand Oakland, let him/her see what Oakland is all about
- For the chief and OPD officers in general, the reality is it may not be safe for them and their families to live in Oakland. Have to think about their kids in school, how they would be treated when folks find out dad/mom is a cop, could lead to hostile situations
- Give him/her a chance to succeed, will continue doing the things we’re doing to help him/her succeed, participate in NCPCs
- For the NCPCs, it would be great to have the chief attend meetings, something the community appreciates, chief that gets out of office
- Let them know the budget is tight and they will have limited resources
- Why are we doing this now while still under Negotiated Settlement Agreement (NSA)? Why are we rushing to make decision by April? Why not leave Whent in place, deal with NSA/ federal process?
- OPD has certain priorities, not necessarily the same as for my neighborhood; new chief should let the community know what his/her priorities are -- and why they are priorities

Question #5: What are you willing to do or contribute to help the new Police Chief?

- I’m willing to step up as a merchant, organize merchants, try to keep merchants happy
- Consider the chief as a CEO, must have diverse experience/skills
- Willing to serve on a panel to interview candidates with CPAB/Oakland community