



News from: **City of Oakland**

## **IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 10, 2016

### **Mayor Libby Schaaf, City Administrator Sabrina Landreth and Interim Police Chief Ben Fairow Discuss Leadership of the Oakland Police Department**

*Oakland, CA*—At a news conference this morning, Mayor Libby Schaaf and City Administrator Sabrina Landreth announced the resignation of Sean Whent as Oakland Police Chief and the appointment of Ben Fairow as Interim Chief of Police, on loan from BART while the City conducts a national recruitment for a new police chief. Mayor Schaaf, City Administrator Landreth and Chief Fairow responded to questions from the media about recent leadership changes at the Oakland Police Department.

The following is a summary of the topics discussed and Mayor Schaaf's responses, which can be attributed to her.

#### **Selection of the Interim Chief**

It was important that we choose an Interim Police Chief who understands the dynamics in Oakland and who shares our commitment to continuing to rebuild community trust and engage in principled, data-driven policing.

We selected an outside candidate to lead the department because we've always had a short-staffed police department, and by bringing in outside resources, we will not short-change the critical assignments being handled by our existing commanders and staff.

Interim Chief Fairow is the right person to seamlessly continue this department's forward momentum, and we have tremendous confidence in him. Chief Fairow is on loan to the Oakland Police Department from BART, and we are grateful to BART for their support during this time of transition.

#### **National search for new Police Chief**

We are committed to conducting a robust national search. This department deserves stability and great leadership. I am confident that we are in a position now with stable administrative leadership and great forward momentum in our police department to attract top talent to lead this department. This is a difficult and critical time for policing in America and the Bay Area. We have much work ahead to continue building trust with the communities we serve. This department and this leadership team are unequivocally committed to maintaining that priority.

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### **Role of the Federal Monitor**

The City Administrator and I made all the decisions related to this matter. We have obligations to confer with the Court-appointed Monitor on certain decisions, and where required, we received his concurrence. It is very important to us that the Court and the public are confident that the decisions made in this City are the right decisions, regardless of whether or not there is Court involvement.

### **Various layers of independent review underway**

Given the importance of public trust in the outcome of ongoing misconduct investigations, we have put several layers of independent review in place to ensure we uncover any wrongdoing either by officers or in how the investigation has been conducted. In addition to the District Attorney's review of criminal investigations, we have retained a highly respected independent investigator, attorney Morin Jacob of Liebert, Cassidy and Whitmore, to conduct an independent review of the civil and administrative investigations.

When these reviews are complete, we will publicly share everything that we are legally allowed to disclose, and hold fully accountable anyone found to have engaged in misconduct. Also, we will continue improving our screening, recruitment, training and performance monitoring practices to ensure that our employees meet and maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct.

### **Summary of Reviews & Investigations**

#### ***OPD Internal Affairs***

*Scope:*

- Investigating allegations of misconduct by members of the Oakland Police Department

*Status: ONGOING*

- 2 officers resigned
- 2 officers on Administrative Leave

#### ***Alameda County District Attorney's Office***

*Scope:*

- Parallel and independent investigation of allegations of possible criminal misconduct.
- Review of two earlier closed suicide cases to provide additional, outside review of the investigation.

*Status: ONGOING*

#### ***OPD Inspector General and City of Oakland Auditor***

*Scope:*

- Examine OPD recruitment and early warning systems for any practices or patterns that would identify unsuitable candidates from the applicant pool, and ensure the continued suitability of current officers to be on the force.

*Status: ONGOING*

#### ***Morin Jacob of Liebert, Cassidy and Whitmore***

*Scope:*

- Independent review of the OPD Internal Affairs investigation

*Status: RETAINED*

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### **Chief Whent's resignation**

When asked the details of Chief Whent's resignation, Mayor Schaaf stated: Let me be very clear. Chief Whent has never been a subject of the misconduct investigation. I am deeply grateful for the contributions he has made to this department, and I respect his personal decision to resign [read his resignation letter [here](#)]. This is an incredibly difficult job for anyone and for their family.

It is also true that I remain extremely disturbed about the allegations of misconduct in this department. We are thoroughly investigating these allegations to uncover the truth and hold anyone who engaged in misconduct fully accountable.

### **Oakland's efforts to achieve compliance with Court-ordered reforms**

Our community cannot afford to have the hard work and important strides we've made in moving to more principled community-based policing, diminished in any way. We have 3 remaining tasks to complete of the 51 prescribed by the court. We remain focused on sustaining the changes the department has made to ensure the safety of this community.

Chief Whent has moved this department closer to compliance with the Negotiated Settlement Agreement. This department has made tremendous progress under his leadership. Chief Whent has earned Oakland national recognition for our body-worn camera program, procedural justice training, our community-led Ceasefire partnership, implicit bias research and transparent, open data practices. I am grateful for his contributions.

### **Increasing transparency in the Oakland Police Department**

While we have made significant progress in increasing transparency and accountability in the police department, we always have more work to do. For example, there will be several developments over the next week that demonstrate this commitment to transparency:

- On Tuesday, the City Council's Public Safety Committee will be considering the establishment of a citizens' police commission, which I support.
- On Wednesday, the City and Stanford University will release the results of a ground-breaking two-year study addressing implicit bias in policing at a public forum in East Oakland.
- That same day, I will release my first biannual report on principled policing, including comprehensive information on police discipline.
- Also, we have added an additional week of training to our police academy to include ethics training around off-duty conduct in direct response to the misconduct allegations.

We have established many layers of independent review to assure the public that we are being completely thorough and acting with the highest integrity to build on our momentum and increase trust in this department.

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