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Alderman Robert Bauman applauds the appointment of Jeffrey Norman as acting chief

Statement of Alderman Robert J. Bauman December 18, 2020

The Fire and Police Commission (FPC) got it right when they appointed Jeffrey Norman as the next acting chief of the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) at last night's FPC meeting. I have worked closely with Jeffrey Norman for many years when he was captain of MPD's Third District, and when he was an assistant district attorney for Milwaukee County. He was my choice for chief when the current selection process began several months ago.

Now as acting chief he has an opportunity to demonstrate how he would perform in the roll full time. In my judgment there is no better way to assess how someone will perform a job than to place that person in the position for a period of time and evaluate them.

Therefore, I am calling on the FPC to pause the chief selection process, keep Norman in the acting chief position for 6 or 9 months to see how he performs, and then determine if he deserves appointment as permanent chief. There will always be time to start a new national search if his performance falls short.

Moreover, the current chief selection process has, shall we say, broken down.

Of the three finalists, one is pursuing the job of police chief in Madison, WI, another is pursuing a police chief job in his home city of Dallas, TX, and the other, according to numerous sources, has minimal supervisory experience as a FBI agent. Such experience would place him somewhere between the rank of a sergeant or lieutenant within the MPD.

The commission appears to be hopelessly deadlocked in its choice between two of these candidates, and everyone seems to be placing their hope for a decision on the Common Council confirming a new commissioner who has not even undergone the proper background investigation.

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There is no guarantee that the most recent nominee to the FPC will be confirmed, much less in the next three weeks when her first official action would be the selection of the next police chief.

Jeffrey Norman is an excellent candidate for permanent chief. Let's give him a chance to show us what he can do.

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