



CITY of OAKLAND | POLICE COMMISSION

250 FRANK H. OGAWA PLAZA, SUITE 6302 • OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94612

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 12, 2023

Statement From Dr. Tyfahra Milele, Chair of the Oakland Police Commission

Oakland, CA - The Commission appreciates the sentiments expressed by the NAACP on how the mayor could address public safety. We are also deeply disappointed in the mayor's purposeful deflection of the NAACP and community's concerns by casting blame on the Commission for the lack of a police chief, which was brought about by the mayor herself.

The mayor called the community's demand for a state of emergency due to the rise in crime "political theater," and instead, the mayor threatened to call a state of emergency on the Commission if it did not give the mayor a list of candidates by the end of the year. In fact, the mayor's threat on the Commission IS the "political theater."

The Commission has been publicly updating the community about the hiring timeline, and the timeline is posted on the Commission's website. The timeline clearly states that the Commission anticipates sending a list of finalists to the mayor next month. We are perplexed by the mayor's comments to the press as we also updated the mayor and her office on the hiring timeline last week and her office confirmed receipt.

The mayor created this crisis and liability by dismissing the former police chief after an outside investigation report by a San Francisco firm that had questionable quality, sufficiency, and credibility in its analysis and findings. The mayor dismissed the former chief without a plan and pre-empted the Commission's ability to review the investigation report.

After the chief's dismissal, the mayor refused to meet with the Commission leadership for two months and the city only gave the Commission a list of search consultants in May. Instead of providing immediate support and resources for the Commission to do its work, the mayor removed a retired superior court judge – one of seven Regular Commissioners – and severely shorthanded the already small commission of unpaid volunteers.

Nonetheless, the Commission continues to do its due diligence, conducting 5 public forums throughout the city and virtually where it received critical feedback from more than 350 Oaklanders on what they look for in a police chief. Pursuant to the City Charter, we anticipate providing the mayor with a list of finalists next month for her to make the final selection.

We urge the mayor not to scapegoat the Commission for the city's lack of response on public safety concerns. We urge the mayor to immediately replace the Commissioner she removed in June, as required under City Charter. And we urge the mayor to not threaten to usurp the Commission's legal authority and responsibility of the hiring process, like she did with the dismissal of the former police chief before the Commission deliberated.

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