



MAYOR ROBERT M. GREEN

CITY OF CEDAR FALLS, IOWA

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FROM: Mayor Robert M. Green
TO: City Council
DATE: August 6, 2020
SUBJECT: Police Chief Appointment

REF: (a) Code of Ordinances, City of Cedar Falls §2-948: Police Chief Appointment
(b) Iowa Code §400.13: Chief of police and chief of fire department.

1. After careful consideration, and in accordance with the requirements of references (a) and (b), I am recommending Assistant Chief Craig Berte for appointment as Cedar Falls Police Chief. My decision was reached only after significant deliberation; the top candidates were excellent choices for the position, for very different reasons. Weighing the individual merits of the candidates, I believe that Assistant Chief Berte has the traits best-suited to the current executive needs of the Cedar Falls Police Division. These traits will be especially important in the years ahead as Cedar Falls operates under and evaluates the “consolidated public safety model” for effectiveness and continued use.
2. Specific attributes of Assistant Chief Berte considered very positively include:
 - a. *Fifteen Years of CFPD Police Supervisory Experience.* Assistant Chief Berte has an excellent grasp of current executive demands and challenges within the Cedar Falls Police Division. In recent months, he has ably served as Acting Police Chief under unprecedented demanding conditions. He has managed multiple law enforcement challenges, including carrying out the Governor’s Public Health Emergency Proclamations, adjusting to new public safety demands in light of the pandemic, and fostering safe, orderly and effective racial justice demonstrations and counter-demonstrations.
 - b. *Expansive Local Knowledge and Relationships.* Having joined the Cedar Falls Police Department in 1992, Assistant Chief Berte brings nearly thirty years of local experience to this role. Assistant Chief Berte has developed extensive ties with the regional emergency response and law enforcement community. As expressed during the selection process, these leaders know, trust and respect Assistant Chief Berte. This sentiment was echoed by other civic partners, including executive leaders of College Hill Partnership, Community Main Street, Grow Cedar Valley and others. These relationships are vital to the success of our community, particularly during times of crisis. Moreover, Assistant Chief Berte has experienced much of Cedar Falls’ modern history first-hand, through the lens the Cedar Falls Police. This contextualization of law enforcement challenges will no doubt pay dividends in the years ahead.

- c. *A Focus on Stability Within Police Operations.* The past several years have seen dramatic public safety changes; the establishment of the Cedar Falls Department of Public Safety and the shift from career Police Officers and Firefighters to Public Safety Officers will require time for adjustment – a ‘settling-in period’. The Public Safety Model must be given a fair opportunity to function without drastic new changes, so that a proper evaluation can be made of its merits and validity. For this reason, stability and continuity are in the best interest of the City at this time. Such sentiments were echoed in the Administrator’s and Public Safety Director’s recommendation to me for Assistant Chief Berte’s appointment.
- d. *A Departmental Commitment to Correcting Racial Injustice.* Racial justice concerns have recently reached a boiling point around the country. I have been impressed with Assistant Chief Berte’s thoughtful, respectful and constructive engagement with demonstrators, as well as the Police Division’s proactivity in training against implicit bias. Moreover, I am satisfied that the Cedar Falls Police Division is moving quickly and appropriately to locally address valid national concerns about departmental use of force / response to resistance policies. Finally, I will note that as part of the appointment process, I reached out to the NAACP of Black Hawk County to learn that they had no records or known concerns about Assistant Chief Berte’s engagement with Black residents in our area.
3. As Mayor, I appreciate that no candidate is perfect. The appointment of Assistant Chief Berte to the Police Chief position does present some ‘opportunity costs’. Specifically, I am concerned that hiring internally limits the ability for new ideas, diverse perspectives, and a wide range of experiences to be infused into the organization. Insular thinking is harmful to an organization, and Assistant Chief Berte and I have had very productive discussions for how to ensure new ideas and perspectives are sought out and encouraged during his time as Police Chief. Working together, I am confident that these reasonable and achievable innovations will result in the same positive outcomes that an “external hire” would have brought to the Police Chief position.
4. Assistant Chief Berte and I have discussed my expectations that he will continually develop as an executive leader, and that he must appreciate the higher order of thinking required of an executive – not just effectively getting things done, but getting the *right* things done. Such professional growth will require that he continually develop his capacity for strategic thinking, that he crafts and communicates a strong vision for the Police Division, and that he marshals resources and support for organizational success. This will require strong mentoring from other law enforcement leaders, continuing post-graduate level education, seeking out of best practices from other organizations.
5. After an exceptional level of scrutiny and deliberation, I believe Assistant Chief Berte is the best-suited candidate for the Cedar Falls Police Chief position. He has been offered a conditional letter of hire, which will become effective upon council approval of this nomination.
6. Please contact me if you have concerns regarding the rationale for my recommendation, or any additional questions about this nomination.

Xc: City Administrator
Director of Public Safety Services