



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR

May 9, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager  
Submitted by: Aram Kouyoumdjian, Director of Human Resources  
Subject: Appointment of the Police Chief

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution confirming the appointment of Jennifer Louis as the Police Chief to be effective May 14, 2023 at an annual base salary of \$301,820.48.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The salary and benefits for the Police Chief are included in the FY 2023-2024 departmental budget. The position is paid 100% from the General Fund (Budget Code: 011-71-701-801-0000-000-421-511120).

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Jennifer Louis has served the City of Berkeley community as a law enforcement professional for over 23 years. Interim Chief Louis began as a Patrol Officer with the Berkeley Police Department in February 1999 and was promoted through the years to Field Training Officer, Police Sergeant, Police Lieutenant, Police Captain – of both Operations and Support Services – and, most recently, Interim Police Chief, the position in which she has served for over two years. As such, Interim Chief Louis has intimate familiarity with the City of Berkeley, its residents, their unique concerns, and the public safety priorities of the City Council.

Over the past two years, Interim Chief Louis has demonstrated herself to be a progressive and visionary leader. Specifically, she has led the Department through the development and implementation of key initiatives, including Fair and Impartial Policing, Reimagining Public Safety, and Police Accountability – all while navigating the constraints and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Interim Chief Louis graduated *cum laude* with a Juris Doctor degree (with a Public Interest Law Certificate) from Santa Clara University, where she ranked in the top 10% of her class and served on law review. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Sociology from California State University, Hayward.

## BACKGROUND

**Executive Recruitment and Stakeholder Input:** The City retained Avery and Associates, an executive search firm, to conduct an extensive search for a new Police Chief. The recruitment process was designed to be a nationwide search, collaborative and inclusive in nature, while considering the needs and priorities of the Berkeley community, the Police Department, and the City Council.

To develop the recruitment brochure, Avery and Associates conducted

- Several status update discussions with the Hiring Steering Committee, where additional input and feedback were incorporated into the recruitment profile and recruitment process;
- A community survey which was designed to elicit helpful information that would shape the recruitment profile and define core competencies to identify, screen, and evaluate candidates. This effort generated a robust response from 273 participants who provided written comments;
- In-person interviews with members of the Police Accountability Board (PAB);
- In-person interviews with the Mayor and each Councilmember; and
- In-person interviews with members of the City of Berkeley's executive team.

The City conducted a competitive interview process consisting of two interview panels made up of community members and City of Berkeley representatives, and a third panel made up of members from the Police Accountability Board. Top candidates were recommended for final interviews that were conducted by the City Manager.

**Departmental Overview:** The new Police Chief for the City of Berkeley Police Department (BPD) will provide leadership for 281 FTEs, including 181 sworn officer positions of all ranks. The department includes the four divisions of Operations, Investigations, Professional Standards, and Support Services. BPD's mission is to safeguard our diverse community through proactive law enforcement and problem solving, treating all people with dignity and respect. The Police Department is organized into five divisions to deliver the following baseline services:

- **Office of the Chief:** The Office of the Chief provides overall leadership and administrative oversight for the Police Department. The Office includes the Police Chief, the Internal Affairs Bureau, and the Fiscal Services Unit.
- **Operations Division:** The Division supports the department's mission by responding to calls for service, conducting initial criminal investigations, making

arrests, issuing citations, and providing crime prevention services and proactive problem-solving efforts, all focused on safeguarding the community. The Operations Division includes Patrol Teams, Bicycle Officers, the Community Services Bureau (i.e., the Area Coordinators, the Public Information Officer, the Police Reserve Program, the Special Events Coordinator, and the Crisis Intervention Training Coordinator), the Special Response Team, and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team.

- **Investigations Division:** The Division supports the Department's mission through the work of several bureaus and units. The Detective Bureau conducts follow-up investigations of felony crimes, including homicides, felony assaults, robberies, sexual assaults, domestic violence assaults, assaults on children and minors, elder abuse, burglaries, identity theft, fraud, and forgery, among other offenses. The Traffic and Parking Enforcement Bureau consists of two units: the Traffic Unit's Motorcycle Officers focus on community safety through enforcement of traffic laws, investigation of serious injury traffic collisions (including fatalities), driving under the influence (DUI) enforcement, and coordinating grant-funded enforcement efforts. The Parking Unit's Parking Enforcement Officers (PEO) enforce applicable state and local codes which regulate parking in the City of Berkeley, and further provide traffic control and support as needed for other Department Divisions (e.g., through working on planned Special Events, or in assisting with major incident scene management). The Crime Analysis Unit provides Department personnel with relevant data and analysis skills to inform enforcement and problem-solving efforts. The Crime Scene Unit is responsible for properly identifying, seizing, and documenting forensic crime scene evidence.
- **Professional Standards Division:** The Division supports the Department's mission through the administration of its hiring and training efforts, police review and maintenance, and systems review, auditing, and project coordination. The Division includes the Personnel and Training Bureau, Policy Sergeant, and Audit Sergeant, as well as professional administrative staff. The Professional Standards Division, through Personnel and Training, facilitates and coordinates all training needs for sworn and non-sworn staff. This includes training that is mandated by law, as well as training required for employee development.
- **Support Services Division:** The Division supports the Department's mission through a variety of essential operational and administrative activities. The Support Services Division comprises the Public Safety Communications Center (which receives and dispatches calls for Police, Fire, and medical services), the Berkeley City Jail, Records, and Front Counter Units, the Property and Evidence Unit, Public Service Technology System Unit, Warrant Unit, and Court Liaison Officer. The Division provides fundamental structural support across all Department divisions.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Interim Chief Louis will utilize her extensive law enforcement experience, educational background in criminal justice and law, institutional knowledge of the Department, and understanding of the evolving nature of community issues and calls for police reform to support the City of Berkeley's culturally rich, ethnically diverse, multi-faceted, and historic community, as well as be a unifying force in engaging and transforming public safety efforts to render fair and equitable services towards providing a safe environment for all constituents.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

A nationwide recruitment for the position was conducted by Avery and Associates, an executive search firm.

CONTACT PERSON

Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager, (510) 981-7000.

Attachment:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONFIRMING THE APPOINTMENT OF JENNIFER LOUIS AS POLICE CHIEF

WHEREAS, Jennifer Louis is currently serving as the Interim Police Chief of the Berkeley Police Department and has over 23 years of experience working in law enforcement, including as Field Training Officer, Police Sergeant, Police Lieutenant, Police Captain (of both Operations and Support Services), and, most recently, Interim Police Chief, the position in which she has served for over two years; and

WHEREAS, Interim Chief Louis brings to the role law enforcement experience from across a number of ranks and divisions, as well as over two decades' worth of knowledge and meaningful relationships within the Berkeley community, including additional experience as a Firearms Training Unit Instructor, Detective in the Domestic Violence Prevention Unit, and Special Response Team Leader; and

WHEREAS, Interim Chief Louis possesses an educational background related to law enforcement, having graduated *cum laude* with a Juris Doctor degree (with a Public Interest Law Certificate) from Santa Clara University, as well as a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Sociology from California State University, Hayward; and

WHEREAS, Interim Chief Louis has led the department through the development and implementation of key initiatives, including Fair and Impartial Policing, Reimagining Public Safety, and Police Accountability – all while navigating the constraints and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Interim Chief Louis has an understanding of the evolving nature of community issues and calls for police reform to support the City of Berkeley's culturally rich, ethnically diverse, multi-faceted, and historic community, as well as be a unifying force in engaging and transforming public safety efforts to render fair and equitable services towards providing a safe environment for all constituents;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that it hereby confirms the City Manager's appointment of Jennifer Louis as the Police Chief, with an annual base salary of \$301,820.48 on the same terms and conditions as other regular at-will employees effective May 14, 2023.

