

Ensuring Continuity In, Effectiveness Of Police Leadership

**The Honorable C. Kim Bracey
Mayor, City of York
April 20, 2010**

Members of City Council, city department heads, city citizens, city police captains and officers, members of the Fraternal Order of Police, interested others, good evening and thank you for the opportunity address you tonight.

I appeal to you tonight to approve a narrow resolution waiving the city residency requirement as it would apply to Acting Police Chief, Wesley Kahley, my choice to serve as Chief of the York City Police Department.

Doing so will provide continuity in public safety leadership and enable the department to immediately implement and intensify Community Policing in all neighborhoods without missing a beat. We cannot afford to wait for a national search that will take months if not longer to conclude when the right leader at the right time – our own seasoned, homegrown talent – is among us today and ready and willing for the next challenge.

Allow me to be clear about what we are asking for and what we are not asking for tonight. I am not here to address council's larger efforts to look into the residency requirement for city department heads and/or non-affiliates as a whole. We are not asking for approval of an ordinance at this time – only a resolution -- and I will not comment in-

depth tonight on the content or possible effects – good or bad – of such an ordinance. That is the purview of the legislative branch of city government – city council, and my understanding is that consideration of changing that ordinance is in your capable hands and will continue to be thoughtfully discussed in committee and in council chambers.

In terms of our modest request this evening, we only are focusing on a narrow resolution to be considered for one long-time city leader in public safety, so that the executive branch of government, City Hall and its departments, can faithfully execute the duties of its office with fidelity and with all dispatch. It is as simple as that.

Our citizens deserve no less, and City Council should support this resolution for four primary reasons.

(1) First, Wes Kahley is the right leader and the right fit right now for the job based on the merits. Specifically, his appointment meets my due diligence requirements and enjoys widespread community support.

I campaigned on and firmly believe that public safety is as critical to the growth of our city as are continued economic and community development, a strong public infrastructure and amenities, and a strong public school system.

A police department visibly engaged in all neighborhoods and reconnected with residents and stakeholders will make huge dividends. It is important that the leader of the department will continue our recent progress and implement and intensify city-wide, department-wide, and neighborhood-wise Community Policing.

Tonight, we ask for your approval of our appointment, Wesley Kahley, a proven leader who has worked and risked his life as an officer in the City of York for 22 years, recently as Captain and Operations Commander and, most recently, as Acting Chief.

The bottom line is that Wes Kahley is the most capable leader for the job. He knows the fabric of the city, he knows the interwoven relationships of neighbors and neighborhoods, and he has a good relationship with residents, other levels of government, business leaders, and religious leaders.

His resume is impressive and has been provided to all of you for review. I also understand and appreciate that each of you knows Wes Kahley and that you are familiar with his education, training, and credentials. In sum, he has the knowledge, experience, philosophy, personality and training to effectively lead now.

After many meetings with Wes Kahley, interviewing our neighborhood stakeholders, and evaluating Wes Kahley's response to my Community Policing philosophy, it was evident that the right fit, based on the merits of the position, was right before our eyes and within our

ranks: our own seasoned, tested homegrown talent ready for the next challenge.

By now, it should be no secret Wes Kahley enjoys widespread support from our law enforcement community, our neighborhoods, our business community, and again our religious leaders.

As an added measure of due diligence, I brought in a community policing expert to interview and vet him: Chief William J. Kelly of the **Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association** and currently the **Police Chief of Abington Township Police Department**.

Chief Kelly, our community policing expert who along with our **Community Advisory Review Team** Public Safety committee supports Captain Kahley's appointment.

In the area of law enforcement, again to name just a few, Jim Tice, **US Attorney's Office**, Chief Tom Gross of **York Area Regional Police** and former city police officer, Chief George Schwartz of **Spring Garden Township** and former city police officer, Chief Arthur Smith of **West Manchester Township**, and Chief Dave Eshbach of Springettsbury Township know Wes and all support his appointment.

To name a few, City residents and public safety stakeholders, Michael Miller, **President of the Neighborhood Alliance**, Mary Ann Bacas, **past president of the Neighborhood Alliance and former City Council President**, Jerri Zimmerman from **Olde Town East**,

Joanne Borders from **Salem Square**, Bobby Simpson from **Crispus Attucks**, and Sam Beard, **President of York City School Board** have met with Captain Kahley and support his appointment.

To name but a few other community stakeholders, **Public Safety Committee Community Advisory Review Team and Downtown, Inc's Public Safety Chair**, Gary Sonke, Beth Gill-McDonald, Clara Anderson, Bev Mackereth, York County Commissioners, York County Sheriffs Dept., Karen Gleba, Jane Conover, Craig Wolf, and Sandy Walker all support his appointment.

Also note that the city has invested substantial resources into Captain Kahley's professional development in the form of continuing education courses and formal education, including both his bachelor's and master's degrees, as well as the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. It would be illogical if not absurd for the city now, after investing in the rising stock of its own talent for two decades, to now sell its stock short before it rises to its true value.

Further, it is time that our officers recognize that, with the right training and career advancement, they, too, can become valued long-term leaders within the department. They will not have to take a job outside of the city, and city residents will not have to watch their investments into social capital flee to other municipalities.

Having said that, as elaborated on in depth earlier, our most important and overriding goal has been to identify and appoint the

most capable leader and best fit for the job – plain and simple. That person is Captain and now Interim Chief Wesley Kahley.

(2) Second, Wes Kahley Has Shown A Commitment To Our Community Policing Philosophy And Already Has Begun Implementing And Intensifying Strategies.

I have listened intently to all who have been gracious enough to lend me their voices, and I have heard what the people demand. So, I campaigned on a philosophy of Community Policing, and, during my inauguration address in January, I announced a commitment to sustainable Community Policing. Also in January, I was honored to elaborate on a vision of **City-wide, Department-wide, and Neighborhood-wide** Community Policing with the White Rose Chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police.

Specifically, I announced that our Police Department will work hand-in-hand with our neighborhood associations, Weed & Seed, City School Board, and the County to implement sustainable, city-wide Community Policing, with measurable goals and outcomes. Community policing is more than a two-way street; it's at least a four-way intersection in that it demands the partnership of and regular communications between public safety professionals of multiple levels of government and multiple city departments as well as civilian leaders and our citizens in all city neighborhoods.

During the evaluation period in which Wes Kahley served as Interim Chief since January of this year, Wes began implementing and intensifying our Community Policing programs.

He has started **Neighborhood Enforcement Units** or “NEU” patrols in Village East, and will soon begin one in the Northeast Neighborhood, an area overdue in receiving additional attention. These complement three others NEUs: the southwest neighborhood or college patrols, west-end and Salem Square patrols, and downtown walking and segway patrols.

During the last 90 days, Wes Kahley also has partnered with the **County Sheriff’s Department** on the county-city nuisance intervention patrols in each of the city’s four magisterial districts, and begun a healthy dialogue with leaders of the city school district. He also secured funding from **Better York** for a community police consultant and funding from the **Women’s Giving** Circle for his library program that partners police and city youth.

(3) Third, our citizens demand confirmed, dedicated leadership now, so we can hit the ground running and not miss a beat.

Members of City Council, we all serve the same constituents, the same people. Our people demand confirmed, dedicated leadership now. We cannot afford to wait when real challenges and problems await us. Crime, plotting, and misbehavior do not take off a day. We need to continue our progress now. As you know, the city has

experienced a decrease in the rate and number of Part I. crimes by 7.1 percent and from 2,949 to 2,307 from 2003 to 2009. As you know, Part I. crimes are the most serious crimes, including murder, rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny, arson, and motor vehicle theft.¹ As shared with the Fraternal Order of Police in January, if we continue this progress, together, we can work to decrease our Part I. crimes to dip below 2,000 per year for the first time in recent memory. Let's shoot for measurable, visionary goals and work toward them as a community.

We also have a five-party strategy for broadening and intensifying Community Policing City-wide, Department-wide and Neighborhood-wise in the year and years to come.

We have serious challenges but also visionary goals and a solid strategy for success. We cannot keep the pressure on criminal and anti-social efforts and keep our community policing efforts running on all cylinders without confirmed leadership at the top. Simply put, we need to hit the ground running, continue our continuity in leadership, and keep our momentum rolling. Our citizens deserve no less.

(4) Fourth, approval of this narrow resolution applying to only one city leader is supported by at least three precedents in recent city history.

¹ The number of Part I. crimes per year are as follows: 2,949 in 2003, 2,933 in 2004, 2,744 in 2005, 2,590 in 2006, 2,585 in 2007, 2,652 in 2008, and 2,307 in 2009.

I am not asking Council to approve something that never has been done. To the contrary, Council reasonably approved three waivers in the past. Chief Bill Hose, Chief Tom Chatman, and Chief Bill Smith all resided outside the city limits while they served as chief. ALL three, excellent leaders of our police department and there is no evidence that the place of domicile of these three gentlemen negatively affected their leadership in or commitment to the city.

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For all of these reasons, Interim Chief Wes Kahley is the right leader at the right time to lead the York City Police Department and I ask for your affirmative approving my consenting my appointment tonight.