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City of Duluth - Communications Office

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SUBJECT: Mayor Larson Announces Top Two Police Chief Candidates - Community Invited to Meet Candidates on April 28

BY: Pakou Ly, Communications Office

Mayor Larson Announces Top Two Police Chief Candidates - Community Invited to Meet Candidates on April 28

[Duluth, MN] – Duluth Mayor Emily Larson announced today that the community review panel has selected Mike Tusken and Brian Kozak as the two finalists for Duluth Police Chief.

“This position impacts the safety and health of our entire community, and we have set the bar very high,” said Mayor Larson. “I’m thrilled to announce that we have two exceptional final candidates,” she added.

Mayor Larson announced her hiring process in January, days after she took office, promising greater transparency and asking for community input. Public comments were solicited on the City’s webpage, and the two finalists will meet with the police bargaining unit and with the public at an open community forum. Mayor Larson will also conduct individual interviews with both finalists.

“I can’t recall a time when the community and police staff have been asked to participate in the selection of a leader who plays such a critical role in our community,” says Mayor Larson.

She went on, “I appreciate everyone who played a role by filling out the community survey, and I’m especially grateful for the commitment of the nine member review panel who provided invaluable insight in reviewing applications and helping to conduct initial interviews.

Panelists included professionals from domestic and sexual violence organizations, NAACP, Civilian Review Board, Greater Downtown Council, Indigenous Commission, Neighborhood Watch, CHUM, State District Court and the Public Defender’s office.

The two finalists are:

Mike Tusken currently serves as the interim Duluth Police Chief. Raised in the Morgan Park neighborhood of Duluth, Tusken brings over 23 years of service to the Duluth department, serving previously as Sergeant and Lieutenant. Tusken was appointed Deputy Police Chief in 2006, by Chief Gordon Ramsay.

Brian Kozak, a Duluth native, brings over 30 years of experience and currently serves as the Police Chief of the Cheyenne, Wyoming Police Department. Prior to Cheyenne, he served for four years as the Chief of Police in Avon, Colorado. Kozak also has 22 years of prior law enforcement experience in Arizona.

Mayor Larson said, “We’ve followed a thorough, inclusive, transparent and robust process, and I’m happy to say that we are ahead of schedule. Now I’m eager to hear from the community.”

The Duluth community is invited to meet and ask questions of the final candidates, Mike Tusken and Brian Kozak, at a public forum on April 28, 2016 at Lincoln Middle School auditorium, 3215 West Third Street. The forum will start at 6:30 PM and will be moderated by Rob Karwath of NorthCoast Communications.

Free DTA shuttle buses will run every 10 minutes from Wheeler Field on Grand Ave to the school. The shuttle will start at 5:45 pm and run until 6:45 pm. The departure shuttles from the school will start at 8:00 pm until 9:00 pm.

After taking in all input, and completing all necessary background checks, Mayor Larson says she will select one of the two finalists in the first week of May to send to the City Council for approval.

As for the Fire Chief search, a community panel has reviewed applications and conducted the first round of interviews. Mayor Larson will announce finalists for this position in the coming days and plans to have this appointment ready during late April or early May.

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