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City of Duluth - Communications Office

411 West First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-730-5230 | www.duluthmn.gov | Emily Larson, Mayor

For more information contact Pakou Ly, Public Information Coordinator 218-730-5309

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SUBJECT: City of Duluth Human Rights Officer to step down

BY: Phil Jents, Community Relations Officer

City of Duluth Human Rights Officer to step down

Bob Grytdahl, the longest serving Human Rights Officer in the State of Minnesota, is stepping down from his role as the City of Duluth Human Rights Officer.

"It has been my honor to serve in this capacity for over 10 years. I've done it wholeheartedly and with deep commitment," explained Bob Grytdahl. "This work has been incredibly rewarding, at times extremely challenging, and I will miss it. At the same time, I feel it's the right time to step aside and allow new leadership to emerge. Duluth is ready for the next chapter in this regard, and so am I," he added. Bob's last day will be March 12th.

Following a 30-year career within the Duluth Police Department, Bob was hired under Mayor Herb Bergson to be the Human Rights Officer for the City of Duluth to further advance the tenants of the Human Rights Ordinance as laid out in City Code. In addition to staffing the Civilian Review Board, Commission on Disabilities and the Human Rights Commission, Bob has fostered positive working relationships through the community, served as the City's Equal Opportunity Officer, provided resources to city employees, actively promoted the value of racial equity and worked hard to engage the community across neighborhoods, incomes, race, ethnicity and gender to advance the human rights of people living in Duluth.

"Rest assured, that while I may be stepping down, I'm not stepping out. I remain committed to these values and the tenants of equity, and remain a resource to the community and to whomever follows me in this role. I have confidence that Mayor Larson and the Duluth City Council will find a strong and capable leader who will grow this work in new ways," Grytdahl said.

In response to Grytdahl's resignation Duluth Mayor Emily Larson thanked him for his long service.

"Bob's work, advocacy, leadership and relationship building has been critical to ensuring the voices of all Duluthians are heard. He leaves a long standing legacy of engagement and while he will certainly be missed, he has laid a strong foundation for this important work to continue," she said.

Larson campaigned on a message of building on Duluth's existing momentum and strong foundations while ensuring that all neighborhoods, and all neighbors, benefit.

"As I build a team I'll be looking to accelerate our efforts to ensure fairness across income, neighborhood and race. The Human Rights Officer is absolutely critical to this work, and Bob's decision creates an opportunity for a new person and energy to carry our vision forward. It speaks volumes about Bob as a person of integrity, a real collaborator and a true leader," Larson said.

"Moving forward, the Human Rights Officer will report directly to the Mayor," Larson said, "and their leadership will be embedded cross-departmentally into the broader work of the city

organization. We'll announce the posting for Human Rights Officer on or around March 1st. That hiring process will be done in partnership with the City Council and, as specified in City Code, in consultation with representatives of the Human Rights Commission. But for now, we honor and thank Bob and his dedicated service to the residents and City of Duluth," she added.

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