

COMMUNITY COMMISSION for PUBLIC SAFETY and  
ACCOUNTABILITY  
COPA CHIEF SEARCH LISTENING SESSION  
Thursday, March 25, 2025  
North Park University  
3225 West Foster Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois

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APPEARANCES:

Vice President Remel Terry  
Commissioner Angel Rubi Navarijo

1           COMMISSIONER RUBI NAVARIJO: Good evening,  
2 everyone. Welcome to the Community Commission  
3 for Public Safety and Accountability's first  
4 public hearing in our process to select a new  
5 Chief Administrator for the Civilian Office of  
6 Police Accountability or known as COPA.

7                   Can people online hear me? Before  
8 we begin, we'd like to provide a brief overview  
9 of COPA's function, responsibilities, and  
10 jurisdiction. This information can also be found  
11 on the informational documents that were provided  
12 to you as you walked into the hearing today.

13                   By ordinance, COPA's mission is to  
14 provide a just and efficient means to fairly and  
15 timely conduct investigations within its  
16 jurisdiction, including investigations of alleged  
17 police misconduct, and to determine whether those  
18 allegations are well-founded, applying a  
19 preponderance of the evidence standard to  
20 identify and address patterns of police  
21 misconduct, and based on information obtained  
22 through such investigations, to make policy  
23 recommendations to improve the Chicago Police  
24 Department and reduce incidents of police

1 misconduct.

2           The Chief Administrator serves a  
3 four-year term and is responsible for leading the  
4 office in a way that is in alignment with its  
5 mission.

6           COPA performs two key police  
7 oversight responsibilities. COPA receives and  
8 registers all complaints filed against members of  
9 the Chicago Police Department, and it  
10 investigates allegations of police misconduct by  
11 members of the Police Department, including both  
12 sworn and civilian employees.

13           COPA's ordinance lists all the  
14 allegations COPA has the jurisdiction to  
15 investigate, including all incidents where a CPD  
16 member discharges a firearm, all incidents where  
17 a person dies or sustains a serious bodily injury  
18 while in custody or because of police action, and  
19 instances of domestic violence, excessive force,  
20 improper search or seizure, sexual misconduct,  
21 and verbal abuse.

22           All complaints that COPA receives  
23 that don't fall under these categories and the  
24 others defined are referred to the Bureau of

1 Internal Affairs, the Office of Inspector  
2 General, or other federal or local enforcement  
3 agencies.

4 For the record, Vice President Terry  
5 is here.

6 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Yes. Please pardon my  
7 tardiness. Thank you all for being here this  
8 evening. I will continue sharing information  
9 about tonight's meeting.

10 On February 13th of this year, the  
11 Chief Administrator of COPA announced her  
12 resignation effective on February 28th.

13 The Mayor will choose an interim  
14 replacement, and the Commission is responsible  
15 for identifying and selecting a permanent  
16 replacement. That selection must be confirmed by  
17 City Council. By ordinance, the Chief  
18 Administrator must have the following minimum  
19 qualifications: An attorney with substantial  
20 experience in criminal, civil rights, and/or  
21 labor law or corporate and/or governmental  
22 investigations, or an individual with substantial  
23 experience in law enforcement oversight or  
24 investigating employee or other wrongdoing.

1 Knowledge of law enforcement, particularly of  
2 internal investigations of wrongdoing and use of  
3 force. A commitment to and knowledge of the need  
4 for and responsibilities of law enforcement, as  
5 well as the need to protect basic constitutional  
6 rights of all affected parties. Demonstrated  
7 integrity, professionalism, sound judgment, and  
8 leadership, and the ability to work with diverse  
9 groups and individuals. The Chief Administrator  
10 cannot be a current or former sworn employee of  
11 CPD, a non-sworn employee of the Police  
12 Department within the last five years, or an  
13 employee of the Cook County State's Attorney's  
14 Office within the last five years.

15 In addition to the minimum  
16 qualifications listed above, the Commission can  
17 also take other qualities into consideration  
18 during its selection process, which is why we are  
19 having our hearing today. The Commission has  
20 committed to receiving substantial public  
21 feedback prior to considering candidates to  
22 ensure that feedback informs the selection  
23 process.

24 To ensure that we are getting

1 uniform feedback from across the City, the format  
2 of the hearing today will be a bit different from  
3 public hearings that we've previously held.

4 When you come up to the microphone  
5 today, we are asking that in your comments, you  
6 answer the following three questions which you  
7 received when you walked in this evening and also  
8 is provided on the screen behind us, and those  
9 questions are: In your opinion, what are the  
10 qualities that the community -- what are the  
11 qualities the community would like to see in a  
12 new chief administrator? What priority should be  
13 the focus of the new chief administrator? And  
14 then the last prompt is to let us know any other  
15 considerations for how commissioners should  
16 assess candidates for the position.

17 We have allotted three minutes per  
18 speaker, and to respond to all the prompts, we  
19 will be recording your responses and using your  
20 feedback as we finalize the criteria we will be  
21 using to select a new COPA chief.

22 If you don't have an opportunity to  
23 speak tonight or if you want to reconsider  
24 speaking this evening, we still would like to

1     hear from you. You can submit your feedback by  
2     filling out our survey that is located on our  
3     website. You can link to it through the QR code  
4     that is on the handout that you received.

5                     With that being said, I'll turn it  
6     over to Commissioner Navarijo to announce the  
7     first speaker.

8             COMMISSIONER NAVARIJO: The first speaker  
9     that I have listed here is Sumi Song. I hope I  
10    said that correctly.

11                    The next speaker we have is Grace  
12    Patino.

13             MS. PATINO: Hi. Okay. So qualities, you  
14    know, someone who has a track record of -- you  
15    know, it's kind of hard to -- I don't know how  
16    you assess this on a resume, but someone who has  
17    a track record of not being afraid to like go  
18    against the grain. Someone who is not -- you  
19    know, who has shown some -- in some way or  
20    another an ability to stand up, you know, to -- I  
21    don't know who, but, you know, someone who's not  
22    going to be easily swayed or pushed around by  
23    political demands. I would say someone with a  
24    history of strong research skills. Someone with

1 a trauma-informed background. And I did really  
2 like that about the last chief administrator, her  
3 background in like criminal sexual assault  
4 advocacy.

5 And I also think -- so it sounds  
6 like you just can't have worked for CPD within  
7 the last five years, but if you were like a  
8 ten-year employee, like, are you able to?

9 So, I mean I think that there would  
10 be a really problematic bias with asking a  
11 retired police officer to investigate police  
12 misconduct.

13 And just as like a citizen of  
14 Chicago, I would also feel similarly concerned  
15 about a state -- a former State's Attorney having  
16 that position, especially in Chicago. We do have  
17 State's Attorneys that have taken torture  
18 survivor confessions, you know, from like Jon  
19 Burge's midnight crew and whatnot. So that would  
20 be really concerning to me.

21 What priorities should be the focus?  
22 I think issues -- well, I mean it's -- you know,  
23 it's the cases that COPA sees already, but any  
24 issues of like sexual assault cases I think are



1 still like a big issue. I think that, you know,  
2 it's not in their purview yet, but I would think  
3 investigation of officers with who, like, joined  
4 hate groups. And then, like, yeah, these  
5 murders. I mean it's what's already assigned  
6 to -- for COPA to look into, I think. And then  
7 consideration for how the Commission should  
8 assess the candidates. That's hard. Well, I  
9 guess seeing if -- asking if these candidates  
10 have any experience in like bias trainings would  
11 be good, I think. What their experience is in  
12 dealing with populations that have experienced  
13 trauma or cases of people who have experienced  
14 trauma. That's it.

15 COMMISSIONER NAVARIJO: Next speaker, Beth  
16 Rochford.

17 MS. ROCHFORD: Hi. Thank you for coming to  
18 the 17th District and having this event. So I am  
19 one of the police District Councilors here in 17.  
20 And though this -- these questions weren't  
21 exactly how I was thinking about it, I'm going to  
22 try and put what I had previously thought I would  
23 say into answering these questions.

24 So what qualities would I like in a

1 chief administrator? Obviously, someone who is a  
2 good listener and has some good administrative  
3 skills. But most importantly, I want somebody  
4 who's tenacious. I don't want anybody who is  
5 biased. But I would like someone who is  
6 distrustful of authority because that's what my  
7 constituents are, distrustful of the Police  
8 Department.

9 And somebody who -- as Grace was  
10 saying, has the ability to stand up to pressure  
11 and, you know, has demonstrated that they are  
12 willing to look at the facts, but, you know, do  
13 their job, and even if the facts are things that  
14 some people won't like, that's what we need them  
15 to be able to reveal to the community.

16 For priorities, I know there's been  
17 an issue with not -- in the past, not having as  
18 much pattern and practice investigations, so I  
19 want that to be something that they definitely  
20 are experienced in and work towards.

21 Obviously, we have set up goals for  
22 them for the year. I want them to be open to  
23 accepting those goals that were set for the  
24 previous administrator and working to make sure

1       that those are things that we -- you know, are  
2       the mission of COPA for this year, and one of  
3       those being the dedication to community police  
4       mediation. I think that's something that the  
5       District Councilors are trying to work with COPA  
6       on, and, you know, we want there to be ways  
7       outside of the traditional discipline process  
8       that has been in the past. And we want there to  
9       be the ability for people to sit down and talk  
10      out some of the low-level complaints and have an  
11      officer hear what the community has to say about  
12      what happened. So that's one of the goals that I  
13      think we need to make sure that that is -- you  
14      know, continues to go forward.

15               Yeah. And I don't think I have  
16      anything else. So thank you.

17           VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you. Our next  
18      speaker is Patrick McNeil.

19           MR. McNEIL: Thank you so much for allowing  
20      me to make a comment tonight.

21               You know, I don't know as much about  
22      COPA as a lot of you do who have a more deep  
23      background with the agency and the other agencies  
24      that are involved in police oversight. I can

1       only say what my impression is as just a member  
2       of the public.

3                       And so what qualities do you want?  
4       You want the chief administrator to be  
5       professional, have the utmost integrity, and to  
6       be completely unbiased. And why is that? I  
7       think as a member of the public, COPA has lost  
8       public confidence and here's why. We all know  
9       about the incident involving Dexter Reed, the  
10      young man who shot at the police and in response,  
11      the police shot back. Well, Andrea Kersten went  
12      on television shortly thereafter and when she's  
13      asked about it, here's the answer that she should  
14      have given. We are just starting our  
15      investigation, so it would be premature for me to  
16      comment on that. As soon as we're done finding  
17      all the facts, I will share my findings with you.  
18      Instead, she went on television and immediately  
19      started speculating and criticizing the police  
20      for possibly having acted inappropriately. And  
21      so everyone saw that and said, This is not an  
22      unbiased investigation. This is an agency that's  
23      just out to get the police. Okay.

24                      So the priority should be finding

1 someone who will restore public confidence to say  
2 this person is coming at every case as a  
3 completely unbiased investigator.

4 Now, you also asked are there any  
5 other considerations. You do need someone who is  
6 a good manager. I mean I don't know what's going  
7 on in COPA. What I read, there's considerable  
8 turmoil among the employees, the staff members  
9 with the previous chief administrator. You need  
10 to get someone not only that has our confidence  
11 but has the confidence of the staff in COPA.

12 So thank you very much for this  
13 opportunity.

14 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you. Is there  
15 anyone who possibly is not signed up as of yet  
16 that would like to share their thoughts? Do we  
17 have anyone online? No.

18 Sure. We have a little bit of time.

19 MS. PATINO: But also just someone who's  
20 willing to meet with the community. I did  
21 appreciate that about her. She was willing to  
22 sit down and have discussions with us. And I  
23 think that's really important. And also someone  
24 who would be willing to interact with the

1 District Councilors as well, because I saw COPA  
2 present in the 10th District one time, and I  
3 thought that that just showed a good level of  
4 professionalism and a good working relationship  
5 with the District Councilors.

6 VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you. Yes.  
7 Okay. Please say your name for the record.

8 MR. LINDLEY: My name is Patrick Lindley.  
9 Last named is spelled L-I-N, as in November, D,  
10 as in delta, L-E-Y. I think the two things that  
11 I would add to what has already been said, first,  
12 a quality that I appreciated about the last chief  
13 administrator was the amount of transparency and  
14 detail that was provided, especially recently in  
15 the goal setting. I think directly compared to  
16 what we saw from the Superintendent and the  
17 Police Board, which were verbal and shared some,  
18 you know, details of what they were doing, Chief  
19 Administrator Kersten brought slides, specific  
20 details, tracked progress against previous goals,  
21 kind of shared what they were focusing on, what  
22 their priorities were. As has been stated that,  
23 you know, transparency needs to be tempered with  
24 making sure it's unbiased and the right timing in

1 releasing information, but letting the City know  
2 how these investigations are being done, that  
3 they're being done professionally, and that we're  
4 making progress.

5                   The last piece is, you know, not  
6 just keeping up with timely response to the cases  
7 and making sure that we're eliminating and  
8 avoiding a backlog, but I think some of the work  
9 that is being done about their policy and  
10 research team to look at the patterns and  
11 practices, look at policies in ways that might  
12 stem the creation of so many complaints, whether  
13 there's changes in policies that might make  
14 interactions with the public, might make the job  
15 of law enforcement easier for officers, for the  
16 public.

17                   I think making sure that the  
18 candidates are read up, understand those  
19 priorities, and can speak to how they will  
20 support that work in the future.

21           VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you. No one  
22 online? So I do want to give one more  
23 opportunity before we close it out. Yes, Beth.  
24 Sure.

1           MS. ROCHFORD: And that -- I know the  
2 ordinance says that you'll do a nationwide  
3 search, and then once the search company presents  
4 you with candidates, you will interview at least  
5 ten candidates. Is there any update on where  
6 things are at in terms of, you know, what that  
7 process looks like?

8           VICE PRESIDENT TERRY: Thank you for that  
9 question. So we're still currently in the RFP  
10 process, right, to find a search firm to help us  
11 with this process in doing the search for the  
12 actual candidates. So that's currently where we  
13 are.

14                       This process, as you can see, will  
15 be similar to our Superintendent search process.  
16 So right now, we are doing these various  
17 listening sessions.

18                       The one next month will be a  
19 virtual listening session, and then we're going  
20 to do one on the west side of the City, as well  
21 as one on the south side of the City.

22                       We're also still planning to do  
23 meetings with our various affinity groups. I  
24 believe we -- I don't know. You guys weren't in

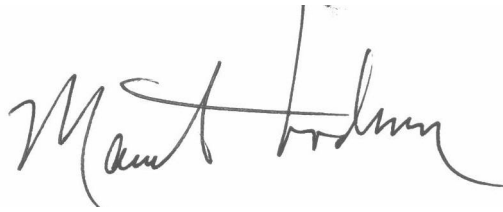


1       formation at the time, District Councilors, but  
2       definitely some work around convening District  
3       Councilors to have a conversation related to  
4       this. So all of the different groups is really  
5       we're in our listening phase as we go through the  
6       RFP process to find a search firm.

7                       Well, since those were all of the  
8       comments that we have for this evening, I do want  
9       to thank you all again for being here, and for  
10      those of you who did not speak tonight, please  
11      also remember that you are able to submit a  
12      comment in writing, and we also encourage you to  
13      tell others about these opportunities. We're on  
14      the north side this time, but the virtual one may  
15      be more accessible for a lot of people, so please  
16      encourage people to participate in that, and  
17      please check out our website for the date and  
18      registration link, as our work continues to find  
19      this new chief administrator. And, again, thank  
20      you all again for coming out.

21                       (WHEREUPON, the proceedings  
22                       were adjourned.)  
23  
24

## 1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 Re: COPA CHIEF SEARCH LISTENING SESSION  
3 March 25, 20254 I, MAUREEN A. WOODMAN, C.S.R., do hereby  
5 certify that the foregoing Report of Proceedings  
6 was recorded stenographically by me and was  
7 reduced to computerized transcript under my  
8 direction, and that the said transcript  
9 constitutes a true record.10 I further certify that I am not a  
11 relative or employee or attorney or counsel of  
12 any of the parties, or a relative or employee of  
13 such attorney or counsel, or financially  
14 interested directly or indirectly in this action.15 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set  
16 my hand of office at Chicago, Illinois this 18th  
17 day of January 2025.18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  


17 MAUREEN A. WOODMAN, CSR

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