



MEDIA ADVISORY 10/25/21

For Immediate Release

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City of Burlington Police Chief Ceremony Rescheduled For Friday, October 29 at 3pm

Burlington, NC – The City of Burlington will hold a ceremony for the new Chief of Police, Brian P. Long, this Friday 10/29 at 3pm. Chief Long will reaffirm his Oath of Office at the Historic Depot in Downtown Burlington (200 South Main Street). The public is invited to attend the outdoor ceremony.

In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will be moved inside the Paramount Theater, located adjacent to the Depot at 128 East Front Street. The City will announce the location change on social media if needed.

(See below for 10/19/21 Media Advisory)

Burlington, NC – Due to a medical emergency within Chief Brian Long’s immediate family, the event planned for 3pm this afternoon is postponed until further notice. Chief Long officially began his tenure as Police Chief this morning.

(See below for original Media Release)

Burlington, NC – The City of Burlington is excited to announce that current Assistant Police Chief Brian P. Long has been selected to be the next Police Chief of the Burlington Police Department. He succeeds Chief Jeffrey Smythe who retired earlier in 2021. Chief Long will be sworn in on Tuesday, October 19 at 3pm at the Municipal Building (425 South Lexington Ave). The public is invited to attend the outdoor ceremony.

Long has served twenty-six years with the Burlington Police Department. When the application process was reopened in September, Long, who had not previously applied, reconsidered his interest in the position. His respect for this community and his commitment to the Burlington Police Department drove Long to apply to be the next Police Chief.

The selection process included rigorous assessment and screening by outside assessors, community members, and internal teams.

“I saw applying for the position as an opportunity to bring stable, consistent leadership to a department and community where I have lived and served for many years. I have been a proud member of the department’s

leadership team for 14 years. Daily, I serve alongside dedicated and innovative staff members who seek to deliver a high level of professional police service,” stated Long. “I am excited to continue working with all staff as we constantly strive to improve safety across our community.”

City Manager Hardin Watkins stated, “I am thrilled that Brian Long has agreed to serve as the City’s Police Chief. He is a talented professional with terrific leadership skills. He understands the needs of his hometown and the agency where he served admirably for 2.5 decades. He has tremendous knowledge of the best practices in modern policing and will hit the ground running. He knows what is important and where to target our efforts.”

Chief Long has served in many roles during his career with the Burlington Police Department, as an officer and within the leadership team, making him an ideal candidate to step into this role. Since 2018, he has served as the Assistant Chief of Police over Operations, supervising two-thirds of the staff of the department. He has previously served in leadership roles as Operations Captain, Administrative Captain, Operations Lieutenant, and Staff Sergeant. In his first 12 years with the department, Chief Long served in various roles in Patrol and across several investigative teams in the Criminal Investigation Division.

Chief Long holds a B.A. in Criminal Justice and Criminology and Associates Degree in Criminal Justice Technology as well as attended the 258th Session of the National FBI Academy. Chief Long has served on the boards of several local organizations and is an active community member both personally and professionally. Currently, he serves on the Board of the United Way of Alamance County and of the Alamance Community College Alumni Board. He is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Police Executive Research Forum.

Chief Long has also been a leader in implementing Intelligence Lead Policing practices within the department. Intelligence Lead Policing is a harm reduction strategy that combats disparate impacts on neighborhoods in the city by focusing on intelligence to zero in on the individuals that are causing the most harm in the community. Prior models called for increased patrols in neighborhoods based on where the offenses occurred. Long believes these methods, not supported with current and relative information, can cause collateral arrests for low level offenses unrelated to violent crime.

Chief Long has spent much of his career advocating for innovation in law enforcement’s role responding to people in mental health crisis. During his tenure at the BPD, he has been a leader in implementing the Mental Health Co-responder model. The model partners law enforcement officers with trained mental health providers and has been shown to drastically improve outcomes.

Long has served as the Department’s Public Information Officer since 2017, honing his ability to communicate directly with the public and the media. This work demonstrated his understanding that full transparency in policing is vital for an effective department.

After a leadership change and during a shifting national climate for law enforcement, department stabilization is a priority for Chief Long. Employee wellness and retention will be key to these efforts. He will also focus on continuing to strengthen the Burlington Police Department’s relationships with the community and with other law enforcement agencies, as well as narrowing in on strategic crime fighting and harm reduction efforts.

Chief Long stated, “I seek to end my career the way I began my career as a young officer, by working directly with community members seeking a safe place to raise a family, to work, and to enjoy the community they choose to call home. This can be accomplished by building trusting relationships, engaging the community directly, and by implementing innovative and equitable police practices.”

A swearing-in ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday October 19, 2021, at 3:00pm at the Municipal Building located at 425 S. Lexington Avenue.

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Our Mission:

“The City of Burlington is dedicated to providing high quality municipal services within our diverse community in a friendly, professional and efficient manner in order to promote the safety, health, and quality of life of residents and employees.”

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