

City of Berkeley

Director of Police Accountability

Community Feedback Meeting Summary

The Mayor and Council Subcommittee held a community feedback meeting regarding the **Director of Police Accountability** recruitment on **May 26th** and invited members of the public to attend virtually and in person to provide their input on the technical and interpersonal competencies of a successful candidate for this role.

Overall Themes Emerging from the Meeting

Beyond the technical expertise of someone with the background in oversight...

Several recurring themes emerged:

- Independence
- Courage in oversight
- Political and organizational savvy
- Transparency
- Trust-building
- Deep understanding of racial justice and Berkeley's activist culture
- Strong communication
- Focus on relationship management
- Investigative and legal competence
- Ability to engage with diverse communities
- Emotional resilience and stamina

Key Core Competencies Identified

1. Independent Oversight, Ethical and Courage

Participants emphasized the importance of a director who can promote accountability while remaining fair, objective, and credible, with an understanding of the realities and complexities of policing.

Desired Competencies

- Demonstrated integrity and independence
- Courage to make difficult or unpopular decisions
- Ability to maintain neutrality and objectivity
- Commitment to transparency and accountability
- Confidence navigating political pressure
- Ability to acknowledge realities and pressures of policing while maintaining rigorous accountability
- Fairness toward officers without compromising oversight

2. Political Savvy & Organizational Navigation

Participants emphasized the importance of building and maintaining effective relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders (PAB, Police Department, City Council, Mayor's Office, unions, city staff, community, etc.), working collaboratively across differing perspectives, and fostering trust, communication, and engagement throughout the community:

Desired Competencies

- Political acumen and diplomacy
- Understanding of municipal governance and city procedures
- Ability to operationalize regulations impartially and effectively
- Ability to navigate competing constituencies

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- Consensus-building and conflict management skills
- Strategic communication abilities

3. Strong Investigative & Legal Expertise

Community members emphasized the need for someone with sufficient technical knowledge to oversee investigations credibly and effectively.

Desired Competencies

- Investigative leadership experience
- Understanding of policing practices and use-of-force issues
- Familiarity with administrative law, constitutional law, or misconduct investigations
- Analytical rigor and attention to detail
- Ability to evaluate evidence impartially

4. Community Engagement & Relationship Building

Participants highlighted the need for someone who can build trust through authentic engagement and take the time to learn and appreciate the diverse communities, history, and character of Berkeley.

Desired Competencies

- Excellent listening and communication skills
- Cultural humility and empathy
- Ability to engage diverse populations and viewpoints
- Community-centered leadership style
- Public trust-building skills

5. Commitment to Racial Equity & Social Justice

Community members discussed the importance of understanding systemic racism and ensuring accountability processes address racial inequities.

Desired Competencies

- Deep understanding of racial equity issues
- Commitment to fair and unbiased oversight
- Awareness of historical distrust between communities and law enforcement
- Equity-centered decision-making

6. Understanding Berkeley's Civic & Activist Culture

Participants emphasized that Berkeley has a unique political culture shaped by activism, civic engagement, and strong community expectations regarding accountability.

Desired Competencies

- Appreciation for Berkeley's activist history and civic values
- Ability to work within a highly engaged and vocal community
- Respect for differing ideological perspectives
- Awareness of local community dynamics and sub-communities

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7. Emotional Resilience & Leadership Stamina

Several participants described the role as demanding, contentious, and emotionally taxing.

Desired Competencies

- Resilience under pressure
- Emotional intelligence and composure
- Ability to withstand pressure from multiple power centers without becoming reactive or compromised
- Personal fortitude and grounded decision-making
- Ability to function as a transformational leader rather than simply a manager
- Persistence and professional maturity

8. Innovation & System Design Orientation

Participants expressed a desire for a leader who can think beyond day-to-day operations and help shape the future of police accountability through innovation, continuous improvement, and effective system design.

Desired Competencies

- Capacity for institutional innovation
- Ability to help Berkeley become a model for accountability reform
- Systems-thinking and reform-oriented leadership

Major Challenges Identified & Corresponding Competencies

Community Concern	Underlying Issue	Desired Solution / Core Competency
Entrenchment between sides	Polarization and mistrust	Consensus-building, diplomacy, conflict resolution
Lack of support/listening toward the Board	Weak collaboration and communication	Active listening, stakeholder engagement, relationship management
Difficulty navigating current structures	Complex governance and oversight systems	Political acumen, municipal systems knowledge
Concerns about transparency	Public distrust and opacity	Transparent communication, accountability orientation
Tension between supporting police and providing oversight	Perceived imbalance or bias	Fair-mindedness, independence, balanced judgment
Concerns about racism and inequity	Historical/community mistrust	Equity-centered leadership, cultural competency
Disconnect with Berkeley communities	Lack of local understanding	Community engagement skills, understanding of Berkeley culture
Challenges managing expectations	Multiple competing demands	Strategic leadership, emotional intelligence, resilience
Need for stronger investigative rigor	Credibility concerns	Investigative expertise, analytical capability
Overly ideological approaches	Distrust of bias	Evidence-based decision-making, objectivity