

Good afternoon. Thank you so much for being here and for caring about this great city. Our Mayor, Eddie DeLoach, frequently starts his public remarks by exclaiming, "It's a great day in the City of Savannah!" While every day is great day in Savannah, today is special because we are announcing the selection of Savannah's next police chief. The selection of a police chief is one of the most important decisions that a city manager and a community makes. The police chief is key member of the city's leadership team and probably the most visible representative of the city outside of the mayor.

It is more important for us now because it comes at a crucial point in our continued movement forward. As we worked together with our communities in creating "Savannah Forward", the City's strategic plan, your City Council made public safety its top priority. The Mayor and City Council made significant investments to make Savannah safer. This year, we reestablished the Savannah Police Department so that we can focus on the public safety needs of our neighborhoods. The Mayor and City Council added more police officers, improved their pay and benefits, upgraded their equipment and vehicles, and approved opened a new Eastside precinct. A new Northwest precinct will open in just a few weeks, and later this year, the long-awaited new central precinct will open its doors. The Mayor and City Council's commitment to public safety is paying off. So far, there has been an 18% drop in overall Part I crimes including a 16% drop in violent crime. Compared to last year, we've had six fewer homicides than this time last year and 16 fewer from just two years ago. Robberies and shootings are also down significantly from last year. When it comes to public safety, we are moving in the right direction: Forward.

Following a national search and an intensive selection process that involved community representatives, criminal justice executives, and the City's top staff, we have selected Roy Minter to be Savannah's next police chief. Chief Minter has more than 30 years of public-safety experience. He is currently the Police Chief in Peoria, Arizona, a city of 165,000 residents just outside Phoenix and slightly larger than Savannah. He has been the chief in Peoria since 2011. From 2008-2011 Minter was the Police Chief in Denton, Texas, located in the Dallas

metroplex. Prior to becoming a police chief, he spent 15-years with the Aurora, Colorado Police Department and 10 years with Houston Police Department. He holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a master's degree in Organizational Management. Chief Minter is a great leader – a man of competence and character. He has proven himself in many communities across the country and we are excited that he has agreed to come to our city. He is a 21st Century police executive. He understands the importance of collaboration, he appreciates strong relationships with the community, embraces diversity across all dimensions, practices open communication, and implements progressive policing. His first day at the helm is August 27th.

Now I want to thank a few people who were instrumental in this process. First, I would like to thank those nine community members who took the time to interview the four finalists last week. I want to thank those police chiefs from across Georgia and North Carolina who also helped assess the talents of our finalists. I want to thank members of our executive team, staff, and Alan Reddish from the Mercer Group who helped us attract many qualified applicants, and kept us focused on selecting the right candidate. I wish to thank the 67 candidates for their interest in the city, but more specifically the four finalists to include Assistant Chief Kerry Thomas. Assistant Chief Thomas is a phenomenal individual and a great cop. Our decision does not mean that he is not a great leader in our department. We hope that he will continue to serve this community for many more years to come. I appreciate the leadership that Interim Chief Mark Renew has provided during the past five months. He is an ultimate professional and he accepted the challenge to lead on interim basis without hesitation. He has done an exceptional job. We hope he will stay on during the transition to Chief Minter's leadership. Lastly, I want to thank the entire Savannah Police Department for continuing to serve this community with excellence.

Ronald Reagan once said, *"The greatest leader is not necessarily the one who does the greatest things. He is the one that gets the people to do the greatest things."* I hope the entire Savannah community will join me in welcoming Chief Minter to our city.