

#0129

Sponsor:

**Council
President
Congo**

Co-Sponsors:

**Council
Members
Johnson
Oliver
Gray
Darby
Harlee
Fields
McCoy**

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, there was a Special Public Safety Committee Meeting to address questions and concerns by Wilmington City Council relative to various policing policy matters such as Wilmington Police Department (WPD) Governance, Operations, and Accountability, WPD Diversity, WPD Use of Grants and Funding, WPD Community Response, and Monitoring Crime and Strategy for Violence Prevention. At this meeting, it was alarming to hear the lack of diversity in WPD, considering the City of Wilmington’s diverse population. Nonetheless, it was further disturbing to see no substantive action plan shared with Council to address diversity knowing this has been a concern of this body of Council; and

WHEREAS, Chief Robert J. Tracy was hired April 14, 2017 as the City of Wilmington’s Police Chief. Mayor Michael Purzycki chose Chief Tracy “in large measure because of his demonstrable technical and leadership skills, his reputation for fairness and building trust in the community, and his unmatched background in advanced policing strategies.” Furthermore, Chief Tracy’s salary was compensated to be similar with Chiefs of large cities, but nonetheless this is the highest salary paid for any city employee, including previous Chiefs and Mayors.

WHEREAS, crime and particularly gun violence, continues to plague our City. Chief Tracy shared when hired, “I will work to build on the existing Wilmington partnership of police and community which, when coupled with effective policing strategies, will help us reduce crime and improve community relationships”; however, this concept never transpired. The residents have complained about the lack of visibility of WPD Police Chief following major incidents in the City of Wilmington; and

WHEREAS, this Council asked the Administration on numerous occasions to have a fully funded and operational Citizens Complaint Review Board with the goal of increasing transparency in policing with little movement; and

WHEREAS, City Council has received numerous complaints from WPD staff concerning internal operating procedures. City Council stands united and supportive of WPD sworn officers who are urging for departmental improvement in order to better serve City of Wilmington residents. It is the intent of this Council to see positive change in the department starting with Departmental leadership to increase the morale of WPD.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILMINGTON, that this public body expresses a vote of no confidence in Wilmington Police Chief Robert J. Tracy and Wilmington Police Department current practices under his leadership.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Council urges the City of Wilmington administration to take actionable steps, as the executive branch of government, to actively work with experts to reform Wilmington Police Department.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this body recommends the Administration engage in a national search to identify a third-party entity to conduct an audit of Wilmington Police Department operations and procedures to be completed within 90 days of passage of this legislation.

Passed by City Council,

ATTEST: _____
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: This Resolution is expressing Wilmington City Council’s lack of confidence in Chief of Police, Robert J. Tracy, and expressing the desire of Council for the City’s Administration to engage in actionable police policy and procedural reform immediately.