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July 22, 2020

Josh Arneson  
Town Manager  
Town of Richmond, VT  
203 Bridge Street  
Richmond, VT 05477

Dear Mr. Arneson:

I wish to express my interest in the vacant position of Chief of Police. As you know, my current employment as a Police Sergeant with the Richmond Police Department has afforded me the opportunity to work closely with Chief Muldoon as his second in command. On different occasions, I have been tapped to run the day-to-day operations of the Richmond Police Department in Chief Muldoon's absence. I have also participated in weekly department head and select board meetings and have assisted in leading the Richmond Police Department through the COVID – 19 pandemic.

Before beginning my employment with the Town of Richmond, I spent over four (4) years as the Captain at the Orange County Sheriff's Office. That was a command level leadership position where I was responsible for the oversight of several different divisions and assignments.

I have attended different leadership trainings, the most significant of which are bullet pointed below:

- Leadership in Police Organizations – eighty (80) hours at the Vermont Police Academy
- Homeland Security Leadership Academy – eighty (80) hours at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, Glynco, GA plus eight (8) hour follow-on course in Washington D.C.
- FBI LEEDA Command Leadership Institute – forty (40) hours at the Essex Police Department

Most importantly, I have learned how to be a leader from having the good fortune of working along side Chief Muldoon. In over 18 years of as a Vermont law enforcement officer I have worked with, and for, different types of leaders. I can say without a doubt that Chief Muldoon exemplifies what a law enforcement leader should look like. It was his values, ideals, morals, ethics, and character that led you to hire Chief Muldoon, who has brought this department to where it is today. I share those core values and traits, and vision for the Richmond Police Department moving forward.

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In closing, I would like to say that we are in dark and challenging times. Although Richmond, VT may enjoy a certain degree of insulation from some of the controversy gripping the nation, it would be reckless to equate insulation with immunity. I am prepared to lead this police department through the darkness. It's easy to be a leader when everything is going right. The true measure of a leader is how they perform through adversity. I care about this town, the residents and visitors, and the men and women I work with. If you choose me to be your next Chief of Police I'm confident that we will emerge into the light better and stronger than we were before. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Kapitanski', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sergeant Kyle Kapitanski

### ***Highlights***

- **Works well in solo or team environment**
- **Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written**
- **Strong emphasis on leadership**
- **Able to multi-task**
- **Driven to succeed**
- **Always interested in learning new skills**

### ***Certifications***

- **Certified part-time police officer in January 2002**
- **Certified full-time police officer in November 2005**
- **Field Training Officer**
- **Non-lethal Use of Force and Tactics Instructor**
- **Death Investigator**
- **Less Lethal Impact Munitions Instructor**
- **Chemical Weapons Instructor**
- **Distraction Device Instructor**
- **VCJTC Firearms and Patrol Rifle Instructor**
- **Ruger AR15 Armorer**
- **Homeland Security Leadership Academy Class 3 graduate**
- **Leadership in Police Organizations Class 12 graduate**
- **FBI LEEDA Command Leadership Institute graduate**

## ***Relevant Work History***

### *August 2019 – Present -Richmond Police Department*

- Responsible for providing police services to the Town of Richmond
- Provide direct supervision to all full-time and part-time officers.  
Approve reports and criminal cases
- Acted as “Officer in Charge” while the Chief of Police was on annual/sick leave
- Lead firearms instructor. Responsible for writing lesson plans and courses of fire, running a firing range, and ensuring a safe training environment
- Acting Chief of Police beginning July 24, 2020

### *June 2015 – August 2019 -Orange County Sheriff’s Department - Captain*

- Responsibilities included transporting prisoners to and from court
- Overseeing day to day operations at the department
- General fleet maintenance
- Hiring and employee retention
- Training department members in a variety of different skills
- Provide direct oversight to the Special Investigations Unit detectives

### *June 2012 – June 2015 -Berlin Police Department – Senior Patrol Officer*

- Responsibilities included general patrol work. All functions as a patrol officer for the Town of Berlin
- Field Training Officer
- Use of Force Instructor

### *July 2011 – June 2012 -Randolph Police Department – Patrol Officer*

- Responsibilities included general patrol work. All functions as a patrol officer for the Town of Randolph
- Field Training Officer

### *May 2005 – July 2011 - Hartford Police Department – Patrol Officer*

- Responsibilities included general patrol work. All functions as a patrol officer for the Town of Hartford
- State certified commercial motor vehicle enforcement officer

- State certified Field Training Officer through IPTM
- Motor Vehicle Law instructor for the Full Time Basic Class for Police Professionals at the Vermont Police Academy
- Two-time recipient of the Mentor Award, which is given to an instructor by the graduating class of the Vermont Police Academy for demonstrating the most professionalism, caring, and leadership to the class.

*January 2002 – May 2005 - Rutland County Sheriff's Department – Deputy Sheriff*

- Began in the Security Services Division as a Security Deputy
- Transferred to General Services Division and performed many facets of law enforcement to include: Court Security, Patrol, Traffic Control, Prisoner Transports, Traffic Details, etc.
- Transferred to Patrol Division, where responsibilities included patrol of contract towns and law enforcement functions for the Diamond Run Mall

Richmond is a relatively small and close knit community. I have the good fortune to serve the roughly 4,000 members of this community and the commuter population as a Sergeant with the Richmond Police Department. In this capacity I am able to see how the department is currently functioning, where it is excelling, and where improvement is needed. I have outlined my 90 day strategic plan below.

**Facility** – The current facility is not ideal, but certainly is not a priority in the first 90 days. There is adequate space for officers and support staff to work. Officers are assigned laptop computers for their cruisers, and I expect the officers to limit time in the office so that they can be out and visible/accessible to the public.

**Needs and Desires of Richmond** – Richmond community members have made it clear that they want their police services coming from the Richmond Police Department instead of contracting with an outside agency or relying on the Vermont State Police.

I believe there are several reasons for this. Most importantly, residents want to be able to know and connect with their police officers. The men and women of the Richmond Police Department can dedicate all of their time addressing the needs of Richmond.

The Richmond community members desire and deserve to have a police department that accepts input, feedback, and criticism about its performance with the goal of evolution and improvement. The community needs to have purpose-driven police officers who will work *with* them to solve problems, deter crime, and improve the quality of life.

I plan to meet those needs by encouraging the men and women of the Richmond Police Department to form relationships with the members of the community. I will provide an environment that encourages open communication and transparency. I will ensure that we continue pushing information out to the public via Facebook and Front Porch Forum, and any other platforms appropriate for the particular message.

**Community Policing and the President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing** – In December 2014, Former President Barak Obama ordered the formation of a task force to examine 21<sup>st</sup> century policing in response to the shooting of Michael Brown by Officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, MO. The task force published its final report in May 2015. The report cited six pillars of community policing, those being: building trust and legitimacy, policy and oversight, technology and social media, community policing and crime reduction, training and education, and officer wellness and safety.

I'm proud to say that the Richmond Police Department already embraces and practices much of what was recommended in the report. We talk a lot about policy in any government setting but, as the report points out, culture trumps policy. I would argue that culture is one of the most difficult things to change in any organization, since it is so deeply engrained. When Chief Muldoon took over as the leader of the Richmond Police Department he began to change the culture to be more transparent and community focused. In the months that followed, the entire Richmond Police Department staff had changed and

new officers came in. That made it much easier because the culture of the department is instilled in its members from the start of their employment. Therefore the community policing culture is the standard by which we operate, and the officers embrace that method of policing. The officers are and will continue to be encouraged to do “walk and talks”, and other non-enforcement type contacts with the community. I plan to continue the community “ride along” program as well.

I will continue to have an open door policy where I invite members of the community to come in and speak with me. I will also continue to push information to the community through various platforms, and explore the possibility of expanding that effort by hiring someone on a limited basis to manage our social media accounts. That could ensure that they are monitored and updated frequently. That would also allow us to swiftly communicate about critical incidents so that the community is informed without having to wait for an officer to be available to disseminate the information.

I am currently exploring an alternative to the traditional “SRO” (School Resource Officer) program. Under this re-imagined assignment, the officer would not necessarily be in a particular school all day long. This model would be more akin to an officer who is specially trained in juvenile law. The officer would form relationships with families, school staff, Vermont Department of Children and Families, Community Outreach, Restorative Justice Boards, Vermont Department of Corrections, and other stakeholders. This would allow the officer to interact with the community in a positive way, connect families in need with resources to help improve their home dynamic, offer alternative solutions besides the criminal justice system for petty offenses or delinquency issues, and remove the concern that children of color would be disproportionately disciplined in schools where a traditional SRO is present. This officer could address the needs of youths without aggressive tactics or creating mistrust.

I will update the Richmond Police Department’s mission statement to reflect the needs of today’s community.

The Richmond Police Department currently employs different “less lethal” weapons, which are designed to reduce the likelihood of individuals and officers sustaining injuries when force is necessary to affect an arrest. I will assess these force options and stay abreast of new technologies as they are released to ensure that we are using the safest and most effective tools with the goal of minimizing injuries to individuals and officers.

Apart from the required annual training requisite for all police officers to keep their certification, I encourage all officers to attend trainings in which they are interested, but I will require that they are purpose driven and will help us better address the needs of the community.

Finally, I will continue to ensure that the men and women of the Richmond Police Department are well and resilient, both mentally and physically. The officers are provided with safety equipment and tools necessary to do their jobs. I will ensure that they are also provided with an environment that is compassionate to the challenges of policing and resources to help deal with those challenges.

**Current Policing Issues in Richmond** - Richmond enjoys a relatively low crime rate compared to other areas of Chittenden County. The most prevalent law enforcement issues facing Richmond today are quality of life issues. Specifically, the town has become a very popular place to recreate in the summer time. The confluence of the Winooski River and the Huntington River is in Jonesville. Both of these rivers attract a large number of people who wish to enjoy swimming, tubing, kayaking, canoeing, etc. There are also vast trail systems for hiking, biking, etc.

Perhaps the most pervasive issue that this creates is a lack of parking. The demand for parking has outgrown the supply that the town currently has. People are forced to park on the traveled portion of the roadway, which creates a safety issue for others and is a nuisance for the residents who live in these high-demand areas. A byproduct of congested roadside parking is that it creates a target rich environment for people who wish to commit property crimes such as vandalism and thefts from motor vehicles.

Richmond is also affected by the opiate crisis that has gripped the rest of Vermont. This results in calls to assist rescue with overdoses as well as crimes associated with opiate dependency, including thefts and property crimes.

Lastly, motor vehicle enforcement is high on the priority list for the community. The Richmond Police Department receives many complaints about chronic speeding on certain roads.

To address these issues I plan to work with town officials from all departments, community members, and other stakeholders to create a comprehensive resolution for parking. Ideally, this plan would minimize the need for enforcement by punitive measures and would increase awareness and public safety. To address the drug problem I would have officers gather intelligence through community policing and other strategies. The goal would be to address the problem and not the symptoms. Therefore, it would be more desirable to target law enforcement efforts on drug traffickers and not the users. By arresting the suppliers, while also connecting addicts with resources and agencies to help combat their addiction, we can simultaneously reduce the supply and the demand. To address the motor vehicle complaints, I would gather input from the community and use a combination of messaging and targeted traffic enforcement to change motorist behavior.

**Police Reform and Leadership in the Wake of the George Floyd Killing** – The death of George Floyd at the hands of police in Minneapolis, MN sparked nationwide demand for police reform. Campaigns such as “8 can’t wait” outline the types of reform that some citizens desire of their police departments. There are other groups calling for the defunding or total abolition of police.

It is a difficult time for police officers at every level of the organization. It is critical for the leadership of police organizations to be in tune with the community they serve, as well as the officers who serve that community on a daily basis. With a total sworn staff of less than 10 police officers, it will be my job to build, repair, or preserve the trust and legitimacy given to us by the community. I plan to do so by leading by example. I will make myself available to the community to engage in open dialog. I will go out and seek input rather than waiting for it to come to me, and I will expect the officers of the Richmond Police Department to do the same. I envision “bridging the gap” between the community and the police



in much the same way as Sir Robert Peel, who was considered by many to be the father of modern policing. In his nine “Peelian Principles”, Sir Robert Peel stresses the necessity for the cooperation between the public and the police. Of particular interest is the 7<sup>th</sup> principle, which states, “Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.” I believe it is important as a leader to ensure the police and the community see themselves as equals.

I will also ensure that the men and women of the Richmond Police Department feel properly equipped, supported and cared for in order to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. Officer wellness is immensely important for the officers as well as the community. Officers who are physically and mentally well and have high morale are more likely to be optimistic, objective, and make sound decisions. They are also more likely to be punctual for duty and less likely to abuse sick time. When the officers know that their leadership will prioritize the officers’ wellness, it is less likely that the officers will seek employment elsewhere and more likely that they will subscribe to the culture of the department.

My door is never closed to improvement. Although the Richmond Police Department has already been practicing all of the strategies/procedures called for in the “8 can’t wait” campaign, as well as many of the other areas where reform is sought, I understand that we can always do better. As the leader of the Richmond Police Department I plan to stay apprised of the needs of the community locally and nationally, to ensure that we are always modeling best practice policing.

**Community engagement** – As noted above, community trust is critically important to effective policing. We are, after all, public servants. I would engage the community in several different ways, including: the re-imagined SRO position, attending town meetings, attending select board meetings, participating in public forums, hosting “coffee with a cop” and other informal public events, messaging through Facebook and Front Porch Forum, etc. It is important to be available to ALL members of the community. By diversifying the channels through which we are accessible, we can reach a larger portion of that population.

**Community Outreach Program** – The Town of Richmond is currently one of seven towns in Chittenden County that partners with the Howard Center Community Outreach program. This partnership is an invaluable asset of which I am in complete support.

Calls to defund the police, as mentioned above, often times suggest that money should be taken from police budgets and invested in mental health and social welfare programs. The Richmond Police Department does exactly that with its partnership with Community Outreach. Currently, almost \$10,000 per year from the police department’s budget is spent on the Community Outreach program.

I believe that there are many incidents where the police are not qualified to provide the most appropriate or effective resolution. Through the Community Outreach program, we can be part of the solution if necessary or we can step aside and allow the Outreach personnel to provide services to individuals in a non-confrontational setting.

Given my perception of the success of this program thus far, I am hopeful that it can expand so that Community Outreach personnel can be available to respond to calls for service 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. I would be willing to explore investing more money into this program from the Police Department budget in order to expand the availability of service.

**Crime Prevention Models** – I believe that the best way to prevent crime is by using a combination of theories from the different models. Ultimately, as I've noted above, it is incumbent upon all of us in a society to present our expectations of proper behavior and our willingness to punish bad behavior. By receiving community input regarding what behavior is the most problematic in this area, we can then begin to address it. That would be accomplished in a variety of ways. We would arrest offenders for serious violations and refer them to the State's Attorney's Office for prosecution. We could refer less serious offenses to a restorative justice program, where the community can be involved in the remedy.

In addition to addressing the behavior as it happens, the police should have a role in preventing it from happening in the first place. The SRO has a unique opportunity to offer early intervention with the youth and families in the community. If the youth and community have established trust in the police and the SRO, he/she then has the ability to influence behavior through positive interactions rather than punitive ones. The SRO would also be part of a multi-disciplinary partnership through which constant support and resources can be offered to youths and families as needed. As the saying goes, it takes a village to raise a child.

**Data Driven Policing in Richmond** – By virtue of already working for the Richmond Police Department, I have personal experience in call volume and coverage. Setting that aside, I will use our current records management system (Spillman CAD/RMS) to routinely monitor and evaluate call volume and frequency to ensure we are adequately staffing the department. I will also consider information received from the public and other agencies, particularly if there is a concern about a lack of police coverage on certain days/times.

**Police Service if Richmond Police Department Cannot Provide Coverage** – By statute, responsibility to provide police services defaults to the Vermont State Police if the Richmond Police Department isn't able to provide adequate coverage. Ultimately, this is a question for the residents of Richmond. When the Richmond Police Department is fully staffed, we are on duty from 7:00 AM until midnight and on-call from midnight until 7:00 AM. During that time, Williston Police Department and Vermont State Police have been willing to assist with emergent responses until Richmond Police can arrive on scene. Residents could consider adding additional police officers to cover more hours, requesting to contract with an outside agency (like Williston Police), or leaving after-hours response to Vermont State Police. It may also be feasible to explore grant funding to add officers to the Richmond Police Department at no additional expense to the residents.

**Morale, Recruitment and Retention of Officers** - I addressed this in part while discussing police reform. In addition to that, I would recommend that a salary study be completed. I would recommend that the study accounts for total compensation, not exclusively salary. In the last 12 months, the

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Richmond Police Department has lost two veteran officers to neighboring agencies for significantly higher salaries than Richmond was providing.

**Drug Investigation and Resources** – Drug investigation is a complex and time/resource consuming endeavor. Large scale investigations would almost certainly exceed the capabilities of the Richmond Police Department alone. That said, we are fortunate to have the ability to partner with the Vermont Drug Task Force and/or the DEA task force, both of whom have significantly greater resources than the Richmond Police Department does. I intend to train officers on CrimeINTEL and how to de-conflict targets of drug investigations, as well as how to manage informants so that we can have a cohesive relationship with our partner agencies.