

April 23, 2026

Teresa Theetge

PER INFO. EMPLOYEE

Teresa Theetge,

I have made the decision to remove you as Police Chief effective April 23, 2026. I do not make this decision lightly. Throughout your tenure, I have supported the Police Department's resource needs and have attempted to work with you.

Throughout this time, you demonstrated an unwillingness or inability to maintain alignment with the City's public safety priorities and objectives, collaborate with City departments and City partners, communicate effectively, and be an effective leader of the Police Department. A brief summary of the events and conduct that led to this decision along with some of the reasons for the decision follow.

You were Placed on Administrative Leave After Your Leadership Failures Became More Evident and Only After I Privately Offered You the Opportunity to Step Down.

Your failures in maintaining alignment with the City's public safety priorities and objectives, collaborating with City departments and partners, communicating effectively and being an effective leader of the Police Department became more evident during the summer and fall of 2025, when multiple violent events became public spectacles without clear response, direction or good judgment from you.

In October 2025, after I lost confidence and trust in your ability and commitment to fulfill the responsibilities of Police Chief, I gave you notice and the opportunity to step down *as you had requested of me multiple times over the last two years*. Initially, you said you understood and initiated the process to do so. You then changed your mind. I then placed you on paid administrative leave. To give you the benefit of the doubt and assess whether the issues I was seeing were just with City management, I engaged an independent investigator to further inform me before any decision was made. On March 16, 2026, I received the report from the independent investigation. The investigation, which included interviews of individuals you identified, confirmed my concerns.

On March 31, 2026, you were provided with a pre-disciplinary hearing notice that detailed the charges and reasons for which I was considering removing you as Police Chief. On Friday, April 10, we held the pre-disciplinary hearing. At your request, the hearing was rescheduled twice to accommodate your travel to Florida. At the hearing, you were provided the opportunity to respond to the charges against you, including those in the independent investigation report, and to present any witnesses or documents that you believed challenged or negated the concerns raised in the notice and report, or that I otherwise should consider before making a decision. You attended the hearing along with your lawyer. I asked you to let me know anything you wanted me to consider. You did not present any witnesses or bring any documents or records.

I have reviewed and considered all the information that you provided at the pre-disciplinary hearing.

You Opposed the Summer Safety Plan in 2025 While Multiple Violent Events Became Public Spectacles Without Adequate Response From You.

Although you made broad statements denying the charges in the pre-disciplinary hearing notice letter, during the hearing, you admitted many of the facts that establish your insubordination, inefficiency, and unsatisfactory performance. You also made many other statements that highlighted your failures as Police Chief.

As just one example, you admitted you did not agree with the City's Summer Safety Plan, which included more police coverage in the urban core, and you admitted that I begged you to fill the police work details called for in the summer plan. While you recognized downtown's importance and observed that "however the downtown goes, so goes the region," it was clear that you were not interested in anyone telling you what to do.

You viewed the City and its public safety initiatives, like the Citywide gun violence reduction blueprint, Act for Cincy, and key youth programming like Rec @ Nite, as separate from the work of the police. An effective leader responsible for public safety would look for ways to integrate with these initiatives as part of a comprehensive and robust public safety program.

During your pre-disciplinary hearing, you took no accountability for your actions—or inaction. Instead, you attacked the summer plan, City departments, City partners, and me. You made misleading and untrue statements.

You admitted being opposed to the summer plan. While you claimed it was unreasonable, you admitted that the City had provided the Police Department all the money it requested or needed, including for recruiting and staffing. And while

you claimed the “data” did not support filling details in areas like Washington Park, you also admitted knowing how important the downtown areas were to public safety for the entire region. You did not mandate overtime to fill the details, even though you admitted that you could have.

Moreover, you did not identify efforts on your part to suggest recommended changes or modifications to improve or strengthen the plan you viewed as unreasonable. Unlike effective leaders, who seek to find common ground and build consensus even when they disagree with others’ positions or points of view, you took a dismissive view of the summer plan from the start and refused to engage with it in a positive and productive way.

Incredibly, you said you were never told to follow the summer plan, even though I told you exactly that. On August 12, 2025, I specifically emailed you stating: “I am getting feedback that the details and summer plan we committed to are not being fulfilled as promised. Chief, if we say we are going to do something, we must follow-through. Failing to do so undermines our credibility and trust of our partners who are advocating on our behalf. 1st -I need confirmation that ALL details related to the summer plan we committed to are being filled. ALL of the parks must be filled as promised as well...”

You tried to take credit for the Police Department sending emails to Assistant City Manager John Brazina about what details were filled and what details were not filled, but the weekly updates were established only after I had received feedback that the details and summer plan were not being fulfilled as promised and after I sent an email to you on August 12, 2025, in which I stated: “the Mayor, ACM Brazina and I are being contacted every evening when details are short. This is extremely frustrating and I am sharing this information to underscore the urgency of addressing these issues immediately. Brazina will be checking in with you all to check progress.” ACM Brazina began sending your team weekly emails asking for confirmation as to what details were being filled or not filled. This is just one of many examples where others in the City had to step in because you were not performing your job to the level needed.

You Failed to Effectively Lead, or Demonstrate a Commitment to Lead, After Shootings Near and Around Fountain Square.

After a summer that had already brought state and national attention to the City’s public safety response, you failed to provide leadership in response to two shootings on or near Fountain Square in October 2025.

On October 7, 2025 at 5:30 p.m., there was a shooting near Fountain Square in the heart of the City. On October 13 at 7:30 p.m., there was a shooting on Fountain Square. These events were alarming and further undermined people’s faith in the

safety of our downtown. Although you said that there were police on Fountain Square and that you filled all details on Fountain Square, you admitted that this was after I sent you a text saying "Please please make the fountain square patrols happen...Please please. Give it to a sgt [sergeant]...please". I should not have had to beg you to do this.

You further admitted that on October 14 (the day after the second shooting) you chose to go to a play rather than attend a public safety town hall meeting. You also did not prepare your assistant chief who attended the public safety town hall meeting in your place. You justified this lack of preparation by saying that there was no specific topic to prepare for and no data to put together. It should have been obvious that the nationally publicized July incident would be a main topic at the meeting and result in many questions from those in attendance requiring thoughtful response. This was a failure of communication and leadership.

You confirmed we spoke after the shooting on Fountain Square on October 13, and I told you that it was time for you to step down. You admitted you understood and it was okay. You admitted that I then asked you to send me an email to provide you the opportunity to start the process with dignity. On October 15, you sent an email to start the process asking to discuss your leave balances saying, "I can't stay here forever so I just want a plan."

You said that I did not indicate that you should not go to Denver. This is wrong. Nonetheless, you admitted you went to Denver on October 15, two days after a shooting on Fountain Square and after I had told you that it was time for you to step down. This shows further poor judgment and failure of leadership.

The Police Chief should not need to be told to attend a public safety meeting with local church leaders the night after a shooting on Fountain Square instead of going to a play. And the Police Chief should know how to support the assistant chief sent instead by preparing and discussing likely questions and responses. The Police Chief should not need to be told to stay in town two days after a shooting on Fountain Square when there was mounting concern that you were not fulfilling your duties and the press was asking the Mayor the day before if he still had confidence in you.

You Ignored Feedback and Failed to Recognize or Take Responsibility for Your Communication and Collaboration Failures and the Perception of Favoritism, Nepotism, and Retaliation.

Your lack of recognition of, and failure to take responsibility or accountability for, your own failings is demonstrated by your incredulous claim that you had never been told of *any* dissatisfaction with your work. This is false. As discussed above and below, I communicated my dissatisfaction with your performance both verbally

and by email. In addition, you received negative feedback in the 2024 Cultural Assessment, which you admitted was a “punch to the gut” and which identified issues in communication, favoritism, and unfair discipline. Despite the “punch in the gut”, the concerns raised in 2024 continued through 2025, as shown by the independent investigation report.

You know that communication and leadership by the Police Chief is important. In 2015, you provided a sworn statement supporting the removal of Police Chief Blackwell based on his lack of communication and leadership. Nonetheless, you failed to effectively communicate and opposed communication between the assistant chiefs and City Hall.

You said that you never blocked my staff from talking with the Police Department command staff and that you only told Assistant City Manager Brazina once not to talk with your assistant chiefs. I understand from both your command staff and my staff that this was not the only time you impeded my staff from talking with your command staff.

You said you were extremely collaborative. This is not true. You showed an inability to build bridges and work with important City partners with whom you disagreed. And, in fact, your failures in this area often caused damage to the relationships with City partners that required mending by me and other City officials.

Your interactions with the School Board are one example. You admitted that the School Board said they did not want you to come to any more School Board meetings and complained to the Mayor about you attending a School Board meeting. While this is true, your response ignores that their response was a result of your own conduct at a School Board meeting. The School Board asked you not to come to any more meetings because you attended a meeting and presented the School Board with essentially an invoice for the Police Department costs of dealing with disorderly students. You attended that meeting without telling me or the Mayor you were doing so or what you intended to communicate. When I confronted you about this in the immediate aftermath, you said that you knew the City would not agree with your approach and that you decided that you would just ask for forgiveness after the fact. You damaged this relationship. This exemplifies your poor judgment, failure to collaborate, and failure of leadership.

As another example, you criticized the City’s Law Department. You said you asked the Law Department what you could do to hold parents accountable for their children’s actions. You said the Law Department only told you what you could not do based on case law and did not tell you what you could do. This is wrong. On February 20, 2024, and September 29, 2025, the City Solicitor gave you detailed documents exploring existing criminal statutes, possible parental accountability legislation, and offering other existing avenues to pursue parental accountability

and support families. You did not identify any efforts you made to follow through on any of the suggestions. This is another example of your failure to collaborate and work within the City government.

You blamed the Mayor because you believed he should have had conversations with judges about releasing repeat offenders. You did not take any responsibility for what you could have done differently or better, including ensuring police officers were consistently providing detailed information on reports that prosecutors use to inform judges about specific situations.

You blamed the Police Department for not having cameras installed in January 2026. You admitted knowing that cameras were a priority for the City. However, you did not take any responsibility for the problems with cameras under your years of leadership or take any meaningful actions to address the problems.

You said you have never retaliated, and do not favor family or friends (you said you have no deep friendships in the Police Department). You defended giving your nephew the additional legal liaison responsibility. Your denials missed the point. You did not address the *perception* of retaliation, favoritism and nepotism that was discussed in the 2024 culture assessment and March 16, 2026 independent investigation.

Historically, the City Has Not Provided Performance Reviews to Police Chiefs.

During the hearing, you seemed to take issue with the lack of a performance review, but performance reviews are not typical for someone at your level. Historically, the City has not given written performance reviews for Police Chiefs. Since 1999, the City has only given three written performance reviews to Police Chiefs (in 2006, 2012 and 2017). You did not need a separate evaluation to know where your performance was failing.

We Granted your Request to Step Down.

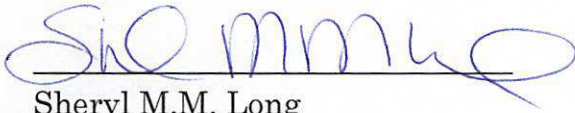
You admitted to having three separate conversations with me over the last two years in which you told me that if things weren't going well to let you know so you could step down with your head held high. After the shooting on Fountain Square, I honored your request and told you that in accordance with your earlier requests, it was time for you to step down. You admitted that you understood this and even sent an email initiating the discussion, but then you changed your mind and refused to resign.

As you know, on December 21, 2022, you agreed that the Police Chief position you were accepting was an unclassified position, that you served at the pleasure of the

City Manager as the appointing authority, and that you could be dismissed from employment without cause at any time. You did not dispute this at the hearing. Although just cause is not required, there is more than just cause here.

Accordingly, effective today, April 23, 2026, I am removing you as Police Chief and terminating your employment for insubordination, inefficiency, and unsatisfactory performance. In addition, you were dishonest during the pre-disciplinary hearing as described above. These are all separate and independent reasons for your termination.

You have ten days from today to appeal this decision by notifying me, in writing, that you wish to appeal.



Sheryl M.M. Long
City Manager

Redaction Log

Redaction Reasons by Exemption

Reason	Description	Pages (Count)
PER INFO. EMPLOYEE	The following items may have been redacted as they are not "records" pursuant to O.R.C. 149.011(G) and 149.43 because they do not serve to document the organization, operations, or other activities of the City of Cincinnati: Social security numbers, drivers' license numbers, tax information, NeoGov identification, bank account numbers, day and month of birth, personal telephone numbers, personal address, personal emails, emergency contacts, spouse and dependent information, insurance beneficiary designation, medical information. State ex rel. Dispatch Printing Co. v. Johnson, 2005-Ohio-4384.	1(1)