



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LaGrange Leaders to Serve on GMA Excellence in Policing Committee

LaGrange, Ga. June 17, 2021 – On June 9th, the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) hosted the kickoff meeting for its “Excellence in Policing” committee. LaGrange Police Chief Lou Dekmar will be serving as co-chair of the committee. Trustbuilding Inc., Executive Director Chalton Askew, is also representing LaGrange on the committee. The committee is comprised of elected officials, city staff, public safety and mental health leaders and community organizers.

Over the next three months, this committee will develop an affordable, achievable, scalable, and measurable set of best practices and guidelines for public safety agencies to utilize as part of GMA’s Certified Cities of Equity and Inclusion (E&I) program.

“The intent of this effort is to provide model policies, training modules, and best practices for law enforcement agencies in Georgia,” said GMA Executive Director Larry Hanson. “Such information is intended to support agencies in their efforts to implement professional policies and practices in a manner that is cost effective, efficient and meets

standards such as those promulgated by state certification and international accreditation agencies in certain areas.”

During the committee’s kickoff meeting, co-chairs LaGrange Police Chief Lou Dekmar and College Park Mayor Bianca Motley Broom outlined the group’s focus areas of personnel, hiring and disciplinary policies, mandatory training areas/modules, model use-of-force policies, the role of technology in policing, communications and public relations, and criminal justice reform. The committee will also uncover partnership opportunities with several state initiatives, including the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police (GACP) and the state’s technical college system.

"This is a very important initiative--not just for policing, but for Georgia," said Chief Dekmar during his first address to the committee members. "What I expect this committee to do is to ensure that contemporary policing takes care of business, because there's no shortage of folks out there that will take care of business for us," he said with citing the courts, plaintiff lawyers and activist groups as examples.

Chief Dekmar’s co-chair, Mayor Motley Broom, also shared an important reminder with the committee, "We are here to build the community that we deserve," she said. "And the community that we deserve is one that has a robust, caring, compassionate, but effective police force."

GMA’s Excellence in Policing Committee Members include:

Co-Chair LaGrange Police Chief Lou Dekmar

Co-Chair College Park Mayor Bianca Motley Broom

Albany Police Chief Michael Persley

Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police Executive Director Butch Ayers

Statesboro Mayor Jonathan McCollar

Norcross Mayor Craig Newton
Athens-Clarke County Manager Blaine Williams
Brunswick City Manager Regina McDuffie
Milton City Manager Steven Krokoff
City Attorney L'Erin Barnes Wiggins representing the cities of Hampton, Riverdale and Lovejoy
Hinesville City Attorney Linnie Darden
Dublin City Attorney Josh Powell
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Georgia Executive Director Kim Jones
Trustbuilding, Inc. Executive Director Chalton Askew
GMA General Counsel Rusi Patel
GMA Property and Liability Claims Manager James Westbury

This committee will have in-person and virtual meetings and will work to develop the certificate program by the end of September 2021. This broader certificate program is a part of the work of GMA's Equity & Inclusion Commission, which was created in June 2020 to recommend actions to the association's board of directors that promote equality, justice, fairness, and diversity; identify and eliminate sources of overt and implied racism, prejudice, and bigotry; and equip city leaders to listen thoughtfully and dialogue constructively with the citizens they serve.

The Georgia Municipal Association is based in Atlanta & is a voluntary, non-profit organization that provides legislative advocacy, educational, employee benefit and consulting services to all of Georgia's 537 cities. GMA anticipates and influences the forces shaping Georgia's cities and provides leadership, tools and services that assist municipal governments in becoming more innovative, effective and responsive. Created in 1933, GMA is the only state organization that represents municipal governments in Georgia. For more information, visit www.gacities.com.

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