

July 23, 2019

To Members of the Milwaukee City Council:

I am writing to recommend Griselda Aldrete as the new Executive Director of the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission.

Ms. Aldrete earned an M.A. degree in Criminal Justice at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) in 2004, and I served as her advisor and director of her M.A Thesis. Based on her resume, I am truly astonished at her accomplishments since her years in our program. She has developed as a passionate advocate for the Milwaukee community and an accomplished leader of organizations.

I believe Ms. Aldrete is exceptionally well-qualified for the position of Director of the FPC. In addition to her extraordinary level of energy and sharp intelligence, her formal education has given her a solid understanding of policing, police-community relations, and the criminal justice system.

With respect to the role of the Fire and Police Commission, Ms. Aldrete gained a solid understanding of policing and the criminal justice system through her undergraduate work at Marquette University and through her Master's degree program at UNO. In her Master's thesis research she developed important insights into the relations between communities of color and the local police. This is particularly relevant to the challenges facing the FPC today.

One particular aspect of her Master's thesis is particularly relevant to the work of the Executive Director of the FPC. Her thesis was based on interviews with members of the Hispanic community in Omaha regarding their perceptions and attitudes toward the Omaha Police Department. Obtaining the participation of interviewees required her to gain their trust in her as a person and as someone who would be able to respond to their observations with understanding and objectivity. She is, therefore, very well qualified to address the many concerns that exist in Milwaukee's diverse community.

Since graduating from our program at UNO, Ms. Aldrete has earned a J.D. at Marquette University Law School, and taught courses on Introduction to Criminal Justice, Introduction to Law, Police and Society, and Community Policing. Teaching these courses served to deepen her understanding of the complex and difficult issues that confront the FPC.

Ms. Aldrete's commitment to serving the community is truly impressive. Her vita lists fifteen separate engagements with community groups and activities. Additionally, in 2014 she was selected to participate in the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government Executive Leadership Program. This program is regarded as one of the outstanding such programs in the country, and being selected to participate is a tribute to her accomplishments and reputation.

Her years with the Hispanic Professionals of Greater Milwaukee (HPGM) adds an additional factor to her list of qualifications. She has invaluable experience in managing a large organization, and in particular how to deal with the many issues and conflicts that inevitably arise. Her resume lists her many accomplishments with respect to increased membership, fundraising, staff, and scholarship funds. Her demonstrated ability to work effectively with a 19-member board of directors prepares her to work with the FPC board. Finally, her accomplishments with the HPGM clearly indicates she has the capacity to develop a vision of organizational development and then to lead a large organization into the future.

One important aspect of being the director of a public agency is active participation in that agency's national professional association. In the case of the FPC, that group is the National Association for Citizen Oversight of the Police (NACOLE), whose members include local agency staff, members of boards of directors, police consultants, academics, and even some local elected officials.

NACOLE has developed into a vibrant national professional association, and its annual meetings regularly involve federal, state and local government officials, leading police officials from around the country, top academic researchers, and private consultants in the field of policing. I have attended all but two or three NACOLE meetings over the past twenty-five years. It is simply the best and most useful meeting of all those I attend each year. Attending these annual meeting will help Ms. Aldrete to learn about the "best practices" in the field of oversight of the police and to select those that are most relevant to the FPC and the Milwaukee community

I have indicated to Ms. Aldrete that, should she be selected as FPC Executive Director, I would be eager to introduce her to key NACOLE leaders at the first meeting she has an opportunity to attend. There are a number of members who have the experience and insights that would be of great value to her as FPC Executive Director.

I might add that the Milwaukee FPC is the oldest such oversight agency in the country, and NACOLE would certainly benefit from her involvement.

In closing, I recommend Griselda Aldrete without reservation. I am confident that she will do an outstanding job for the FPC, the City of Milwaukee, and its people.

If you would like to discuss her qualifications with me, please feel free to call me at my office, 402-554-3590 or on my cell phone, 402-556-4674.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel Walker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'S'.

Professor Samuel Walker