

April 20, 2021

RE: Public Comment for April 20, 2021, City Council Meeting, Closed Session, Item A
Public Comment for April 21, 2021, City Council Meeting, Open Session, Item 18

Dear South Pasadena City Council:

The South Pasadena City Council should not approve the proposed contract to hire Christopher Jordan as city manager for two main reasons. First, Jordan has demonstrated tolerance for racist and prejudicial policing under his watch. Second, he has circumvented government ethics and process standards while serving as a city manager.

As city manager of West Linn, OR, Jordan hired a police chief, [Terry Timeus](#), who had a known history of racism and prejudice.¹ While the details of the incidents may be debated, the problem is Jordan's inaction in the face of police corruption and a racist department culture. This demonstrates a lack of leadership to effectively manage a police department in ways demanded by our community today.

After Jordan left West Linn, the chief whom Jordan hired for the city essentially framed a Black man to help a friend. The incident cost West Linn \$600,000 to settle. While Jordan oversaw Timeus before he departed as West Linn city manager, other mismanaged police matters wound up costing the city an [additional \\$800,000](#).² One of the police settlements resulted from a suit brought by a police captain who was wrongfully terminated while Jordan was city manager and Timeus was chief. Jordan's hired a chief without properly vetting him, and tolerated racism and prejudice by both the chief and members of the West Linn police force. Jordan then obscured [a report](#)³ detailing Timeus' bad behavior and mismanagement. Jordan's record in West Linn is reason enough not to hire him. The substance is horrible.

Moreover, at a time when the community and nation are seeking to end systematic racism and prejudice in policing, hiring Jordan would insult a large portion of the South Pasadena community, exacerbate distrust of local government, and stoke divisiveness rather than bring people together. Many of us participated in focus groups held by the Interim City Manager and the recruitment firm. Jordan reflects none of the priority values and experiences we discussed.

When it comes to ethics in government, Jordan paid a fine for violating [Oregon election law](#) while city manager,⁴ played a role in encouraging the West Linn council to [violate](#)

¹ <https://www.kgw.com/article/news/local/secret-report-on-former-west-linn-police-chief-details-alleged-misconduct/283-b7db7ed6-f908-4fdd-ac05-f75688696652>

² <https://www.oregonlive.com/clackamascounty/2020/03/west-linn-has-paid-out-14-million-in-police-related-legal-settlements-in-last-decade-records-reveal.html>

³ <https://pamplinmedia.com/pt/9-news/452800-369266-west-linn-police-investigators-terry-timeus-report-went-unread>

⁴ https://ballotpedia.org/Local_officials_in_Oregon_slapped_with_fines_for_violating_election_laws

[the state's ethics and public meetings law](#),⁵ and allowed [use of staff time](#) while city manager to form a local government leadership organization many felt was aimed at self-promotion.⁶ Later as [city manager of Los Altos](#), Jordan refused to follow city council direction regarding the venue for meetings and withheld information about the cost of an emergency operations center project.⁷ Jordan left Los Altos with a \$180,000 severance agreement to terminate his contract early.

We challenge whether South Pasadena's process for recruiting and hiring a city manager has been sound and whether the city has been well served by its recruitment firm. Rather than considering fresh candidates capable of dealing with today's pressing social justice issues, the process has produced the status quo. We are asked to accept a candidate with, at best, a checkered past, who does not offer the promise of progress for our city.

Accordingly, we call on the city council to continue the recruitment process, consider using a better recruitment consultant and fresh position description. Do not hire Jordan as city manager.

Sincerely,



⁵ <https://pamplinmedia.com/wlt/95-news/160319-mayor-councilors-admit-ethics-violation>

⁶ <https://pamplinmedia.com/wlt/95-news/282839-158998-complaint-filed-regarding-citys-relationship-with-local-nonprofit>

⁷ <https://padailypost.com/2020/11/21/chris-jordan-resigns-as-los-altos-city-manager/>