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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF SYDNEY ROBERTS AS COPA
CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR**

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced City Council approval of Sydney Roberts as the next Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) Chief Administrator.

"This is an important step on the city's road to creating a strong, lasting system of police accountability," Mayor Emanuel said. "I am grateful to the search committee volunteers, who represent many communities in our city, for coming together to select Sydney, and I thank the Council for giving COPA the stability it needs to build trust with residents. Sydney's law enforcement expertise, commitment to transparency and career in accountability will serve her well in this new role."

Following a national search, in March, members of the COPA Chief Administrator Selection Search Committee announced their recommendation for the next leader of the City's civilian police accountability agency and Mayor Emanuel accepted the committee's recommendation. With today's City Council approval, Roberts' appointment will fill the remainder of Sharon Fairley's four-year term.

"I am very pleased and excited to get started, as there is a lot of work to be done," Sydney Roberts said. "As an agency, we want to build trust with the community and law enforcement. Transparency will be a very important part of what we do, as well as accessibility. The city of Chicago and its residents deserve a robust police oversight agency. I look forward to making COPA the best police oversight body in the country."

The search committee's mission, developed by the committee itself, was to "draw on their diverse experiences and use cooperative efforts to screen and evaluate candidates' dedication to the goals of public safety, community engagement, objectivity, thoroughness and independence." They were responsible for planning and articulating the job requirements, conducting outreach and recruitment, and interviewing candidates before submitting their final recommendation to the Mayor. The search committee conducted multiple meetings over the five-month process to determine applicant qualifications, including gathering input from police accountability experts in other cities. In addition, every committee member was afforded an opportunity to review applications and meet all candidates before making a final recommendation.

"Sydney Roberts is the right person, at the right time, for the right job," Alderman Ariel Reboyras, Chairman of the City Council Committee on Public Safety, said. "Sydney will not only uphold COPA's core values of integrity, transparency, independence and timeliness, she will work closely with Chicago residents and lead this important organization into the future."

The 20-member volunteer search committee, consisting of advocacy leaders, members of the COPA Advisory Council, faith leaders, academics and attorneys, conducted a local and national search to find the next permanent COPA Chief Administrator. While the committee had the opportunity to recommend multiple candidates, it determined Roberts was the best applicant and submitted only her for consideration.

"Sydney was the choice of a very diverse and highly motivated search committee," Paula Wolff, Director of the Illinois Justice Project and search committee co-chair, said. "In addition to her years of management experience and her superb investigative skills, we were impressed with her passion for public accountability and respect for the rights of all residents of Chicago-- community members and police officers alike. Those who know her and have worked with her uniformly commented that 'she will always do what is right.'"

Sydney Roberts has more than 30 years of experience in state and local government agencies involved in policing and oversight, where she had extensive involvement in investigations of allegations of wrongdoing by civilian and sworn personnel. Since 2010, Roberts has served in the Secretary of State Department of Police, first as Chief Deputy Director/Colonel and then as Director where she oversaw all statewide investigative districts as well as the security of the Illinois State Capitol Campus. From 2005 to 2010, she served as First Deputy and then Chief Operating Officer for the Illinois Office of Executive Inspector General, leading investigations of fraud, waste, abuse and misconduct. Before that, she was Inspector General for the state Department of Human Services. Prior, she served as a sworn member of law enforcement, including as Police Commander of the Maywood Police Department where she led internal affairs efforts in the NJ Essex County Prosecutor Office as a Lieutenant of Internal Affairs.

"Sydney Roberts has done an outstanding job as Director of the Illinois Secretary of State Police and she is an excellent choice to serve as Chief Administrator for COPA. Sydney brings legal training, a law enforcement background and an ability to work well with people from different points of view," said Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, adding, "she will do very well in this position."

Roberts holds a Bachelor's of Science from the University of Delaware, a Juris Doctor from Rutgers School of Law and a Master's of Science in criminology from the University of Oxford. She is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

"I had the opportunity to know Sydney from when we worked at the Illinois Department of Human Services," Grace Hou, President of the Woods Foundation, said. "I remember her to be a person of integrity - motivated by truth and justice above all."

Roberts' appointment was subject to the approval by City Council, as provided in the Civilian Office of Police Accountability ordinance. She will serve out the remainder of the inaugural four-year term, which began with the launch of COPA on September 15, 2017.

“It was an honor to serve on the Search Committee, representing a diverse cross-section of our community, and whose members were focused and diligent in our work to find a leader who would fulfill the highest values of our city in the important work of police accountability,” Z Scott, Partner at Foley & Lardner LLP and search committee co-chair, said . “One of the most critical public safety tools is trust, and COPA’s new leader must demonstrate professionalism, independence and fairness in all of their pursuits. There is no individual more qualified or capable to complete that mission than Sydney.”

In October 2016, the City Council passed Mayor Emanuel’s Civilian Office of Police Accountability ordinance establishing COPA, following public hearings, discussions with Council members, feedback from residents across the city and the Police Accountability Task Force report. In October 2017, Mayor Emanuel appointed the chairs of COPA Chief Administrator Search Committee: Paula Wolff, Director of the Illinois Justice Project, and Z Scott, Partner at Foley & Lardner LLP. In November 2017, Mayor Emanuel named the members of the COPA Chief Administrator Search Committee. During the search, retired Judge Patricia Banks, former presiding judge of the Elder Law & Miscellaneous Remedies Division, was appointed and currently serves as interim-Chief Administrator.

“Sydney Roberts impressed the committee with her strong credentials, relevant experience, and commitment to both law enforcement and the communities they serve,” Bonnie Allen, Executive Director, Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights, said. “It was an honor to serve on the search committee and I commend the City for inviting a broad range of individuals that represented key constituencies to be a part of this process.”

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