



NORTH PORT POLICE DEPARTMENT

January 22, 2024

Jennifer Pritt, Executive Director
Florida Police Chiefs Association
2636 Mitcham Drive
Tallahassee, Florida 32308

Re: The William B. Berger Outstanding Chief Executive Officer of the Year Award
Nomination of Chief Todd R. Garrison

Dear Executive Director Pritt,

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Chief Todd R. Garrison for *The William B. Berger Outstanding Chief Executive of the Year Award* for 2023. As an executive leader with the North Port Police Department, I have had the honor to work closely with Chief Garrison since his inauguration in July 2018. I can vouch for his dedication, hard work, and exceptional achievements as the Department's Chief of Police.

Chief Garrison's approach is simple – care about the men and women you lead and make the community a safe place to live, work, and play. To Chief Garrison, this means advocating for his workforce, staying in the forefront of technology systems and applications, and proactively adapting to constant change and growth. Not so simple facing the challenges of today's law enforcement. But Chief Garrison is a hard-charging leader with a documented history of achieving results.

Let's start with money. In April 2023, the Department struggled with being the lowest-paid agency in the region. With just over one year left in a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), Chief Garrison led the charge in fostering City officials in opening the current CBA with the Police Benevolent Association (PBA) members. A truly unpredicted move. In June 2023, the Department's starting pay for a law enforcement officer increased by more than \$10,500.00. Officers already on staff also received the same \$10,500.00 increase in pay. This was a move Chief Garrison stood firm on to avoid compression amongst the rank and file.

In October 2023, the Department's telecommunication team became the lowest-paid dispatchers in the region. Chief Garrison conducted a pay study analysis and presented his concerns to City leadership and once again was able to gain the support and trust to have the City open the CBA contract for a *second* time to increase the starting pay from \$43,000.00 to \$61,000.00 with all telecommunicators receiving an \$18,000.00 increase in salary. That change became effective in January 2024.

Then there is technology. Chief Garrison is a huge supporter of technology in law enforcement and is trailblazing in the Twelfth Judicial Circuit with the usage of (fixed) License Plate Readers (LPR) across the entire 104 square miles of our City. The Department now has ninety LPRs and twenty-six fixed locations.

During the year, the Department created and implemented an eight-member Drone Unit. Equipped with the latest technology, the drones have proven to be an invaluable asset to the officers as well as the community in an unprecedented number of ways.

Shortly thereafter was the development, research, and deployment of body worn cameras. Chief Garrison also led the charge in the Twelfth Judicial Circuit in being one of the first to allow outer vest carriers for uniformed personnel.

Adding to the list is the acquisition of the first Armored Bearcat vehicle for the Special Response Team. And spoiler alert – our Community Outreach van, a/k/a the ice cream truck, will soon be rolling through the community!

But some would say we are most proud of Chief Garrison's ability to equip and open, in February 2023, the Department's first Real-Time Intelligence Center (RTIC). It is nothing short of phenomenal. In addition to the LPR live feeds from all over the City, the Center can view real time live drone footage as well. Through Chief Garrison's leadership, these advanced technology features have undoubtedly made our community a safer place to live, work, and play.

Last is change and growth – two distinct concepts that don't intimidate Chief Garrison. Adapting to the times, the first notable action Chief Garrison took in 2023 was the allowance for exposed tattoos in the Department. At the time, no other agency north of Charlotte County had taken this position.

It's no secret that our City and the Department are growing by leaps and bounds. Chief Garrison is in tune with this growth and has strongly advocated for a new police headquarters. He hired a firm to complete a space, staff, and facilities needs study that showed our Department was 185% above capacity and was fifty-two officers short. Immediately following, City officials purchased nineteen acres of land for a new police headquarters that will meet the Department's staffing and housing needs into the year 2060. A bond referendum to the voters for a new headquarters is set for 2024.

Chief Garrison's leadership has continued to thrive over the years, bringing trust and legitimacy not only to our community but to the members of the Department. After serving just over five years at the North Port Police Department, Chief Garrison has had his foot on the peddle in making our agency self-sustaining. He has fought and advocated for over twenty-seven additional law enforcement officers and twelve additional civilian positions since his tenure and was just awarded in October 2023, ten additional officers through the Department of Justice COPS grant.

On top of all his responsibilities as Chief of Police, Chief Garrison is also the District 1 Director of the Florida Police Chiefs Association, a Board of Director for the Tampa Bay Area Chiefs of Police Association, a member of the Southwest Florida Police Chiefs Association and the area representative

for the Florida FBI National Academy Associates. And let us not forget his most treasured membership, that of husband, father, and son of the Garrison family.

In conclusion, success is something you pursue, and Chief Garrison is always in full pursuit of prioritizing the men and women that he leads and the community that he serves. Our Department is truly blessed to have a Chief and leader who can be open and honest and who genuinely cares. I am confident that he will continue to make a positive impact in the future and lead our Department to even greater accomplishments. I believe Chief Todd R. Garrison is an excellent candidate for *The William B. Berger Outstanding Chief Executive of the Year Award*.

Thank you for your consideration of Chief Garrison's nomination. Please let me know if you require any additional information.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Morales', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christopher Morales
Deputy Chief of Police
FBI National Academy, Session 264

CM/sw