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Contact: Melissa Parrish

Phone: 517.333.2048

Email: melissa@kingmedianow.com

Website: KingMediaNow.com

City of St. Johns Celebrates Leadership of Police Chief David Kirk

ST. JOHNS, MI: When Chief David Kirk was hired to lead the St. Johns Police Department in 2016, he was tasked with addressing four major components of SJPD: operations, processes, policies and facilities. Over the past six years, Kirk has made significant strides in achieving the vision he shares with the City Commission.

“It is my personal pledge to use all my resources and capabilities to fashion the SJPD into a flagship organization,” says Kirk. “We have high professional standards and a commitment to the safety of our community. It is my honor to lead the fine men and women who embrace these priorities.”

Kirk’s accomplishments include the addition of new technology that is improving departmental efficiency and helping officers perform their duties more smoothly. Under his leadership, the SJPD has fully implemented a centralized records management system, launched new reporting to assure the department meets implicit bias tracking requirements, received a \$22,000 grant for body-worn cameras, and completed an upgrade and expansion of the CCTV camera system in downtown St. Johns.

Kirk has also focused on employee recruitment, retention and satisfaction as he works to build an agency in which officers and administrative staff take pride. He successfully added a Deputy Chief of Police who assists with strategic planning and the development and execution of daily operations. Locating, improving and transitioning to a new police headquarters that meets all statutory operational requirements was another major project for Kirk.

“The SJPD enjoys an incredibly positive relationship with our residents,” says City of St. Johns Mayor Scott Dzurka. “Chief Kirk’s focus on the community policing model and the way he and his officers interact with residents and businesses is an important part of making St. Johns a safe place to live, work and visit.”

On April 14, 2022, Kirk was placed on administrative leave so the City could investigate and address staff concerns expressed in a workplace satisfaction survey. An independent consultant conducted more than 20 interviews to effectively understand the work environment at SJPD, and based on the results, the City found no wrongdoing on the part of Chief Kirk. Kirk resumed his duties as Chief of Police on June 6, 2022, with a commitment to address areas of improvement identified in the investigation, including communication, policy and procedure implementation, workplace incentives, community visibility and officer engagement.

“It is important for residents to know that all City staff are required to follow personnel rules, and no one is ever above questions or investigations,” explains St. Johns City Manager Chad Gamble. “Equally important is to assure that when these investigations are completed and allegations are not substantiated, we clearly communicate those conclusions to our constituents and in this case, preserve the personal and professional reputation that our Chief has forged over the course of his illustrious career. We are very proud of Chief Kirk and the officers that serve and protect our City.”

The City of St. Johns, Michigan is a historic community founded in 1856. Known as the Mint City due to its unique agricultural heritage, St. Johns honors its roots while also planting the seeds for thriving small businesses and industry hubs. The best of both worlds, the city offers a charming, small-town feel with an easy commute to downtown Lansing. St. Johns serves as the Clinton County seat and provides a full range of municipal services to about 8,000 residents. Learn more at cityofstjohnsmi.com.

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For more information, please contact Melissa Parrish at 517.333.2048