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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CITY OF BURLINGTON – FIRE CHIEF PERRY HOWARD AND THE CITY BEGIN LEADERSHIP TRANSITION PLAN FOR THE CITY OF BURLINGTON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The City of Burlington and the City of Burlington Fire Chief Perry Howard have worked out an arrangement to ensure continuity in the Fire Department’s leadership structure. Over the course of the past month, the City and Chief Howard have addressed Chief Howard’s pursuit of other opportunities and his pending resignation from the Department in June 2016. Through this transition plan, the City will begin the process of looking for its next Fire Chief and focus on attracting high quality applicants.

According to Mayor Robert Miller, “the City is excited about the opportunity to move forward with its next phase of developing the Fire Department. Under Chief Howard’s leadership, the City was able to implement many of the changes recommended in the McGrath study. The next phase will enable the City to address other areas in the Fire Department to best serve the residents of our community. Through this transition, we can identify a thoughtful plan and focus on attracting high quality individuals to serve as the next Fire Chief, while maintaining a high level of expertise with Chief Howard as we move through this process. We don’t want to rush. We want to get this right, because we know how important this position is to our Fire Department members and our community.”

“The next Chief will have new challenges to address. We want to strengthen our volunteers and add to our numbers, we also want to strengthen our community connections. The next Chief has a good foundation to build from, and we believe anyone in our community interested in serving on the Fire Department should talk to Mayor Miller and/or City Administrator Walters about the opportunities we offer,” continued Mayor Miller.

Chief Howard has served as the City of Burlington Fire Chief and City Emergency Manager since June 3, 2013. He implemented the *Greater Cooperative Opportunities-Between the City of Burlington Fire Department, the Town of Burlington Fire Department, and the Burlington Rescue Squad* study prepared by McGrath Consulting Group, Inc. in 2013. Since 2013, the Fire Department has enhanced training programs that include establishing a Driver/Operator Training program, a Technical Rescue Team, initiating a First Responder/EMS program, an Intern program for college students, and establishing an Explorer program for high school students.

Chief Howard’s anticipated last day of service to the City is June 4, 2016. The Police & Fire Commission will make the final decision regarding who is appointed as the next Fire Chief. “I will begin working with the Police & Fire Commission to start the process for finding our next Fire Chief. As part of that process, I will listen to Fire Department members, so we can identify skills and abilities that they want from the next Fire Chief,” said Administrator Carina Walters.

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