



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
City of Duluth - Communications Office

411 West First Street, Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-730-5230 | www.duluthmn.gov | Emily Larson, Mayor

For more information contact Pakou Ly, Public Information Coordinator 218-730-5309

DATE: 4/20/2016

SUBJECT: Mayor Larson Announces Top Two Finalists for Duluth Fire Chief

BY: Pakou Ly, Communications Office

Mayor Larson Announces Top Two Finalists for Duluth Fire Chief

[Duluth, MN] - Mayor Emily Larson announced that the community review panel selected two internal candidates -- Dennis Edwards and James Dawson -- as finalists for Duluth Fire Chief.

Dennis Edwards: Edwards has been in the Fire Service for 25 years and is a 20-year veteran of the Duluth Fire Department serving as a Firefighter, FEO, Fire Captain, and most recently Assistant Fire Chief. Through this he has gained experience in a variety of Leadership roles and has also been a Fire Instructor for 24 years.

James Dawson: Dawson is a 26-year veteran of the Duluth Fire Department serving the majority of these years as Fire Captain. He also has nearly 28 years of Leadership experience with the Air National Guard and had been a teacher in the Duluth School District.

"I'm very excited about the two finalists and the talent and skills they bring to the position. Fire services are critical public services for the health, safety and security of our community. These two individuals have proudly served Duluth for decades, and bring the passion and skills needed to help shape Duluth's next chapter" said Mayor Larson.

Duluth's Fire Chief manages a staff of over 140 fire professionals and building inspectors, and operates a budget in excess of \$14 million. Besides fighting fires, the Chief oversees key aspects of the health and safety of our community, including acting as the city's Emergency Manager and working in the schools and neighborhoods to address fire safety and prevention.

In January Mayor Larson outlined a hiring process that included public commentary and an opportunity for Fire Department staff to meet and ask questions of the two finalists.

"This hiring process for Fire Chief is the first I know of where the community and department staff has been invited to participate," Larson said.

The Duluth Fire Chief position has been vacant since last fall when Bryan Bushey retired after 32 of years of service to Duluth. Erik Simonson, Deputy Fire Chief, was asked by Mayor Larson to undertake the Fire Chief responsibilities in January.

"I want to thank Erik for demonstrating great leadership and for his deep commitment to Duluth as acting Chief, while we undertook the search for a new Fire Chief," said Larson.

"I also want to acknowledge the commitment of our community review panel members. I cannot overstate how important their input has been," the Mayor added.

Community panelists consisted of representatives from: Lake Superior College Emergency Response Training Center, St. Luke's Hospital, NAACP, Gold Cross Ambulance, Duluth Indigenous Commission, maurices, Duluth Landlord Association as well as representatives from

the Emergency Management Planning and Human Resources fields.

The two finalists will also have one-on-one interviews with Mayor Larson, who anticipates making a final decision in the coming week with the appointment going forward to the City Council for approval in early May.

#