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News Release

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City Responds to Vine Street Report Findings *Officials Address Next Steps*

Champaign, IL This afternoon, City of Champaign Officials held a news conference in response to the Investigative Report released by States Attorney Julia Reitz. The report was regarding the officer-involved shooting that occurred at 906 W. Vine Street on Friday, October 9, 2009 in which Kiwane Carrington lost his life. Officials discussed the impact on the community, outlined specific facts of the case involving Police Chief RT Finney and addressed next steps in moving the community forward. We are deeply saddened by the loss of Kiwane Carrington and the impact it has had on the community. "Our sympathy and prayers continue to go out to all touched by this unsettling experience", stated Champaign Mayor Jerry Schweighart.

For the first time, Police Chief R T Finney who was at the scene of the incident spoke, "I feel deep remorse and pain for this incident," stated Chief RT Finney. "I regret the pain this has caused the Carrington family and our community. The Carrington family has been and continues to be in the prayers of me and my family," he added. "My prayers are also with the men and women of the Champaign Police Department who are dedicated professionals placing themselves in harms way every day. I am proud of the job that they do and we are committed to doing a better job in the future."

City Manager Steve Carter addressed the Police Chief's role in the incident stating that, "based on an initial internal review with respect to the Chief's actions and consultation with the Lead Investigator from the Illinois State Police and Champaign County State's Attorney, it was my conclusion that the Police Chief's actions were consistent with departmental policies and thus there was no cause to place him on leave." In addition:

- Finney's response to the reported crime in progress, as the nearest officer to the location, was in line with his duty as a police officer and consistent with departmental policy.
- It was determined very early that the weapon involved in the shooting was not the Chief's weapon.
- Finney's removing himself from active involvement in the scene following the incident, turning over command to Deputy Chief Daniels and cooperating fully with the Multijurisdictional Investigative Team, reflected appropriate professional judgment.

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During this tragedy, it has been important for City staff and Council to hear the heartfelt concerns presented by so many citizens of Champaign. “I pledge to you today that we are listening and that we will do what it takes to become a community that grows stronger and wiser”, stated Carter. “We want to be a City staff who acts with integrity, cares for the well-being of others, and works together to serve each and every City resident”, he added. Carter has directed staff to begin implementing six (6) immediate actions:

- 1) *Follow through on changes to the Use of Force Policy.*
- 2) *Review the current police complaint process and make recommendations to the City Council for improvements based on citizen feedback.*
- 3) *Bring in persons from outside the City structure to review the investigation report to date and direct further investigation if needed, making recommendations to the City Manager for improvements to policy and training.*
- 4) *Review the police officer recruitment and selection process with the objective of greater community participation, including community representatives on the Chief’s interview panel. Frankly, we need to do a better job of recruiting, hiring and retaining more African American, Latino and women police officers, but we need the community’s help.*
- 5) *Work with African American community members to create a new police officer community orientation program which will allow a new officer to positively build relationships and understanding of the African American community. We want our officers deeply immersed into the community. We want them to personally know the people they are protecting and serving.*
- 6) *Support the City Council and the Human Relations Commission in hosting a Community Forum, to allow citizens, police, youth and agencies serving youth, including the school district and park district, to identify police and community issues and suggest solutions.*

“This is a defining moment for Champaign. We, as a community, all share in the responsibility of making sure this does not happen again”, stated Carter. “I have hope that all citizens will pull together, begin to heal and make certain that in the end, we are a stronger community, with a true community oriented police department, and one in which all of our youth will grow knowing the support of the entire community”, he added.

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