



March 3, 2023

To the Organizers of Justice for Yia Xiong,

I am in receipt of your letter dated February 28, 2023. As my office shared in our invitation for a meeting, I appreciate you reaching out as we all look for answers and process the many facets of this tragedy.

An officer involved fatality is one of the most challenging traumas a city can endure, leaving a permanent, devastating impact on the family and friends of the deceased, the women and men of our Saint Paul Police Department, and our entire community.

As always, I am committed to ensuring a thorough, timely and transparent investigation. Our established protocol for incidents of this nature, built through years of public input and demand, is to immediately engage the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) to conduct an independent investigation; and to release body camera footage as quickly as possible, once initial witness statements are collected and the family has had an opportunity to view it first.

Upon completion of their independent investigation, the BCA will forward their findings to the Ramsey County Attorney's Office. To be clear, this exact same process has governed every event of this nature since the beginning of my administration.

While Chief Henry and I remain available to discuss these items in person, I can offer the following in response to your inquiries:

1. As stated above, an independent investigation into this tragedy is already underway, and is being conducted by the BCA. The BCA will forward findings to the Ramsey County Attorney's Office upon completion of their investigation. As the elected officials in your group are well aware, all decisions related to potential prosecution will be made solely and independently by the Ramsey County Attorney, based on the investigation's findings. Neither I, as Mayor, nor the Police Chief, have any authority in criminal charging or prosecuting decisions related to this tragedy — indeed, our shared passion for an independent investigation demands such separation. Please note that this independent investigatory process, which we employ for any event of this nature, has been established through significant community process and demand.
2. The scope of the independent investigation currently being conducted by the BCA includes all actions of all persons on-scene related to this tragedy. Any determinations related to the conduct of any officer would be assessed from the findings of the BCA investigation, when it is complete.
3. Your request for an investigation by an independent party is already underway by the BCA.

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4. The Minnesota Attorney General is a separate and distinct entity which operates independently from City government. Any questions or requests for action by the Attorney General should be presented directly to that office.
 5. Body camera footage related to this tragedy was turned over to the BCA as part of their independent investigation. Any further release of body camera footage would be available through the BCA's release of public data. The BCA has publicly stated that such additional data will be released upon completion of their investigation.
 6. The City of Saint Paul does not operate our local 911 system. Any available data of this type may be accessed through Ramsey County, who dispatches police and fire departments for all cities in Ramsey County through their Emergency Communications Center, and is subject to MN State Statute 13.82, subd. 4.

While a previously existing commitment prevents me from meeting at the time dictated in your letter, as my office has already communicated, we welcome your group's visit.

Thank you for your active engagement in this matter; your sustained passion and commitment is a vital asset in our drive to build a stronger and more equitable city together. We look forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,



Mayor Melvin Carter

CC: Chief Axel Henry