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Mayor names new top cop

Longtime Detroit officer tapped for Dearborn chief post

By Jason Carmel Davis, Press & Guide Newspapers

PUBLISHED: October 29, 2008

DEARBORN - The search consisted of 15 applicants. Five of those candidates received interviews and from those five, Detroit Police Department Deputy Chief Ronald Haddad has been chosen to serve as the city of Dearborn's next police chief.

Dearborn Mayor Jack O'Reilly

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Tuesday morning announced that

Haddad, a 34-year law enforcement veteran, would take over the post left vacant after the passing of longtime Dearborn Police Officer Michael Cesleski.

Before accepting the position, Haddad previously served as deputy chief and commanding officer of the northwestern district of the Detroit Police Department. Haddad, 55, retired from the force in 2007 to take on a chief of security post with Chrysler at the company's body truck plant.

"This is still in the preliminary stage," O'Reilly said. "This position became one of the most difficult under extenuating circumstances, so we had to move along pretty quickly. It still has to be taken to the (Dearborn City Council) for approval and review. Their decision will most likely come at the second council meeting in November."

Experience was key

O'Reilly said Haddad's wealth of experience in a number of areas — he was responsible for the Northwestern District Incident Response Division, Tactical Operations Section, Auxiliary Services and the Office of Homeland Security — set him apart from the other candidates. He also said Haddad has a willingness to take the department as is, cultivate relationships with personnel and build upon that

Haddad, who received his bachelor's degree from the University of Detroit in 19

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and a master's from Eastern Michigan University in 1997, also had a role in overseeing a number of big Detroit events, including the Major League Baseball All-Star game in 2005 and Super Bowl XL in 2006.

"Some of the other candidates wanted to come in and set up the department in the vision right off the bat," O'Reilly said. "We found out from the people we talked that (Haddad) has a very good reputation."

A sticking point for O'Reilly was that the selected applicant must reside in Dearborn. A number of the candidates weren't willing to make that move. The housing market may have played a role in that, O'Reilly said, but Haddad, a lifelong Detroit resident, is looking forward to becoming a part of the Dearborn community.

"I've noticed that living in the city where you work isn't a requirement for all departments," O'Reilly said. "But if you look at (Haddad's) resume, you'll see he has remained a big part of the Detroit community and he's planning on being the same way in Dearborn."

Uniform selection process

The selection process was a strenuous one, as, along with O'Reilly, a team of former current and former city officials was formed to help the mayor select a new chief. The team consisted of Dearborn Chief of Staff Mark Guido, Human Resources Director Valerie Murphy-Goodrich, retired Dearborn Police Chief Greg Guibord and Corporation Counsel Deb Walling.

Each candidate was asked the same set of 26 questions, O'Reilly said. Each person in the five-person panel was given a 100-point scoring sheet for resume review experience accounted for a maximum of 70 points, while education made up the other 30 points. None of the panelists had individual discussions about the candidates. Everything was discussed when the group was ready to score an applicant.

"We tried to do it textbook style," O'Reilly said, adding that Haddad garnered a score of 89.6. He received the highest score from four of the panelists and was second by one point for the fifth, the mayor said.

"(Haddad) has very good leadership skills and he's a good listener. He knows he not coming in to fix something that's broken. He's coming in looking to build what we already have," O'Reilly said.

"He's already acknowledged that we have some good things going on."



Post open to several

O'Reilly said only one current Dearborn police officer applied for the position, even though it was open to current staffers.

Deputy Chief Gregg Brighton, who took on that post after Celeski's passing after it had been left unfilled for a period of time, decided not to apply for the position, O'Reilly said.

"(Brighton) is going to stay in that post for now and he's doing a terrific job," O'Reilly said. "I have no doubt that he'll be ready for the position when it becomes open in the future."

The post will be open in the near future — the next 3-5 years — since Haddad, O'Reilly said, doesn't see taking this post as a long-term prospect. O'Reilly said

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that after working under four mayors and at least 11 police chiefs, Haddad saw tl Dearborn opening as a very good opportunity.

O'Reilly said taking the post for Haddad would allow him to answer a number of "what ifs" that pop into the mind of anyone moving up the ranks in any profession.

"(Haddad) made it clear to me that he would take the post for 3-5 years and then : what happens," O'Reilly said.

Haddad's salary is still being negotiated, O'Reilly said, along with pension and health benefits. That also needs to be discussed with the city council.

"I'm very pleased with the selection and I'm confident that he will help with the evolution of this department," O'Reilly said.

Contact News Editor Jason Carmel Davis at (313) 359-7820 or jadavis@heritage.com.



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