Three out-of-state candidates vying for Gallup chief of police position

Written by By Chrissy Largo Sun Correspondent
Friday, 04 December 2015 07:09



Three potential candidates met with City of Gallup officials and community members to address their interest in the position of chief of police with the Gallup Police Department during a meet and greet at the Second Streets Event Center Dec. 1.

The selected candidate will fill the shoes of retiring Police Chief Robert Cron.

The finalists names are Jeffrey Powell, from the City of Palestine Police Department in Palestine, Texas, Eric Rubin, from the Denver Police Department in Denver, Colo., and Fred Thompson, from Valley City Police Department in Valley City, ND.

“Obviously the chief of police is a very important position for the city,” City Manager Maryann Ustick said. “We are sorry to see our chief of police retire and we just want to make sure we find someone that can fill his very big shoes. As you can see, we are doing a pretty comprehensive process and involving the community.”

The course of action of hiring a chief of police position involves the tedious interviewing process of three panels: law enforcement, city management and citizen panel. These panels are made up of representatives from business communities comprised of various industries, and city officials within Gallup.

Upon completion of the interviewing process, each panel will submit a recommendation for occupancy of the position and a background check will be processed. A negotiation of a contract and salary will follow and it should take several weeks before a candidate is recommended.

“There is a good amount of experience from community members and city staff on these panels and I think that it will be a good thorough process,” District 2 City Councilor Allan Landavazo said. “In the end, whoever is chosen, will serve our community well.”

After 23 years of law enforcement experience, and a Marine Corps veteran from 1986 to 1990, Jeffrey Powell quickly transitioned into the field of law enforcement. His career started at the Harris County Sheriff’s Department in Houston, TX as a jailer and sheriff’s deputy.

In early 1994, he moved to Palestine, TX and started his career as a patrolman for eight years and worked his way up to assistant chief for the Palestine Police Department. He has a Master of Science degree in Applied Criminology and holds a bachelor’s degree in Criminal Justice.

“What interested me about Gallup is, I’m fairly adventurous and new cultures and a mix of peoples is nothing scary to me,” Powell said. “I look at this as an opportunity to work with the community, and I am fairly big on community policing. I am really big on the officers treating the folks right on the day-to-day operations and that’s what I would expect as new chief of police.”

On Jan.1, Eric Rubin will celebrate his 30 years of employment with the Denver Police Department; however, he hopes to fill the position as chief of police to “Where I am leading an organization, in order to apply what I’ve learned, while learning from others at the same time and that is how I see this position,” Rubin said.

Originally from Southern California, he moved to the suburbs of Denver with his parents at a young age. His interest in law enforcement started in high school as an explorer cadet and since then he has gained more than 33 years of experience in law enforcement.

Prior to his employment with the Denver Police Department, he worked for the Arapahoe County Sheriff’s Department in Centennial, Colo., as deputy sheriff on the patrol division from 1983 to 1985.

Before that, he worked within the same entity, as a crime analyst from 1982 to 1983. He has a Master of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and his bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice.

His hobbies include exercising (strength training and running), hiking, photography, and graphics. He currently holds the position as captain of police with the city and county of the Denver Police Department.

"What I emphasize is valuing the people that you work with because ultimately at the end of the day, they are the ones who get this job done on behalf of our communities," Rubin said. "I think that it is critical that they have a say, and that they have great experiences."

Fred Thompson started his law enforcement career in New Jersey in the early 1970s, in a small town called Milltown, as a reserve police officer for five years.

While on vacationing in Las Vegas, he met his future wife and he eventually moved Las Vegas, NV. He worked part-time as a security guard at the Silver Nugget Casino and one night he helped assist a police officer from the North Las Vegas Police Department on a burglary call.

Thompson captured the burglar and later received a letter of commendation from the NLVPD in which he was employed with for two years. He moved on to work for the Henderson Police Department in Henderson, NV, which at the time was as a small town of 90-square miles and a population of 34,000 people. Twenty-nine years later, the town grew to 110-square miles and a population of 280,000 people.

Thompson said he had a "ringside seat to observe and work in an area that had significant growth."

In June of 2012, he retired from the Henderson Police Department as rank of captain, part of an early retirement buyout program offered by the city of Henderson. He was eventually hired by the Valley City Police Department in Valley City, ND., with a population of 7,000 people.

He became assistant emergency manager, which gave him ample experience in homeland security affairs. He has a bachelor's degree in Public Administration and has an Associate's Science Degree in Criminal Justice.

"I look forward to having the opportunity to come down to Gallup. It is a nice little town, there is a lot of activity there and stuff to keep you interested," Thompson said. "I'm used to a large department and the challenges of a large department and Valley City doesn't have it. So, I am looking for a bigger, better challenge in my career."

During that evening, Mayor Jackie McKinney applauded all three candidates interest in the Gallup community.

"There's nothing like it. We are very proud of our community," he said. "You are in the most patriotic small town in America so, welcome to Gallup and we are looking forward to the interview process."