

Five apply for Port police chief's job

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
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Field of potential successors to department's outgoing leader includes three out-of-state candidates

Five people — three of them from out of state — have applied to become Port Washington's next police chief, officials said.

The other two applicants are from Wisconsin, but outside Ozaukee County, Police and Fire Commission chairman Rick Nelson said Tuesday.

Advertisements for the position were posted on Aug. 1, Nelson said, and the first application, which was from someone in South Milwaukee, was received by the city on Aug. 4.

"I have no idea how many applicants we're going to get," he told the commission Monday, noting that the last time the city sought a police chief, 72 applications were received after a nationwide search.

This time, the city is only advertising for applicants throughout Wisconsin.

Thomas, who has been chief since August 2005, has announced he will retire effective Dec. 31.

Nelson said he was surprised that the initial candidates for the job came from outside the area, noting officers working nearby knew about the opening before it was advertised.

"It's kind of interesting (that most of the first applications came from outside the state)," Nelson said.

Those applications came from Connecticut, New York and Georgia, he said.

"That's the power of the Internet," commission member Mike Mueller said.

Commission member Terry Tietzen said the city should anticipate a number of applications from area officers.

"I will guarantee we will have several in-county candidates," said Tietzen, a retired Mequon police officer. "I can name several."

Officials have said there are five potential candidates in the department — Captain Mike Keller and lieutenants Kevin Hingiss, Mike Davel, Tom Barbuch and Eric Leet.

Applications will be accepted by the city through 5 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 31. A committee of five police chiefs from outside Ozaukee County will screen the applications on Sept. 7, and those that make the initial cut will be presented to the commission on Sept. 12.

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The candidates will answer essay questions, then be interviewed by the commission. The finalists will then go to an assessment center for evaluation.

The finalists will then have a final interview with the commission, after which background checks and physical evaluations will be performed. The commission will then selecte its finalist.

Commission members will be able to review all the applications as they come in, the group agreed Monday.