

Candidates list for police chief pared by panel

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Wednesday, 14 September 2011 21:30

The Port Washington Police and Fire Commission on Monday trimmed the list of 29 candidates for police chief almost in half, Chairman Rick Nelson said.

In doing this, the commission accepted without change the recommendation of a committee of five area police chiefs who reviewed the applications and initially narrowed the list of potential candidates.

Brown Deer Police Chief Steve Rinzel, head of the panel of chiefs, went over the applications and the city's criteria for its new chief with the commission in closed session Monday.

"We thought they did a terrific job," Nelson said.

Nelson said the new, narrower list includes a "substantial number" of applicants from within the department, but would not say if all five of the candidates from the Port police department remain in the running.

All five of the potential candidates in the department applied for the job, Nelson said.

"Thanks to Chief (Richard) Thomas, our guys really are quite qualified," he said. "He's sent them to leadership classes, management schools."

The remaining candidates will now be asked to answer a list of about six questions that will be sent to them this week, Nelson said. These will be due in about two weeks, after which the panel will again trim the list of applicants. The commission is expected to review that list when it meets in October, and will either accept the chiefs' recommendation or cull the list further, Nelson said.

Those remaining in the running for chief — Nelson said he expects the number will be six or seven — will then be sent to an assessment center in late October or early November.

After that, the commission will hold one-on-one interviews with the finalists before selecting a successor to Thomas, he said. A background check will be done following the selection.

Thomas, who has been the department's chief since August 2005, is retiring on Dec. 31. The commission hopes to have his successor on the job before that time.