



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

December 2, 2020

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Garrett Toy, Town Manager

SUBJECT: Ratify appointment of Lieutenant Rico Tabaranza as the interim Police Chief

RECOMMENDATION

Ratify the Town Manager's appointment of Lieutenant (Lt.) Rico Tabaranza as the interim Police Chief

DISCUSSION

At its October 7th meeting, the Council received a report on the Police Chief recruitment process and considered the staff recommendation to appoint an interim Police Chief in December to allow for more community input into the process for a permanent replacement for the Chief.

Specifically, we indicated that the department cannot operate without a Police Chief when Chief Morin retires in mid-December. However, in order to give proper time and thought to the process for a permanent replacement, the Town should appoint an interim Police Chief in December. The most logical and qualified choice would be Lieutenant Rico Tabaranza. Lt. Tabaranza is currently the second in command and Chief Morin has been mentoring and training Lt. Tabaranza for a number of years. The Police Chief does serve shifts as a watch commander, performs patrol duties (i.e., second officer on duty,) as well as covers the 911 dispatch center for illnesses and lunch breaks. Hence, the appointment of Lt. Tabaranza makes the most sense since he is familiar with the Fairfax Police Chief's role, the needs of the department and is able to fill any open position within the department.

The appointment of an interim Chief provides leadership and structure for the department and provides the Council with the flexibility to allow for a thoughtful and a community inclusive process. In addition, the internal appointment also would allow the Council to evaluate Lt. Tabaranza's performance during this interim period while keeping all their options open. Should the Council not want to make the appointment permanent or decide to pursue other options, Lt. Tabaranza would return to his former position as a police lieutenant.

Per Town Code, the Town Manager's appointment of department heads such as an interim Police Chief requires the ratification of the Town Council. The appointment would take effect on December 16th which is Chief Morin's retirement date. As we discussed at the October Council meeting, the length of the interim assignment will depend on the Council's future desires regarding the Police Chief.

FISCAL IMPACT

We also reported at the Council's October meeting that an interim appointment will require a temporary salary increase for the Lieutenant as well as potential overtime costs for supervisors to fill vacant shifts. The Town Manager has approved a 15% salary increase for Lt. Tabaranza to serve as the interim Police Chief. It should be noted that there may be some occasions when Lt. Tabaranza would be eligible to receive overtime pay as a Lieutenant (e.g., coming in on a day off to fill a supervisor shift). While this should not be a common occurrence, if required, Lt. Tabaranza would be compensated based on his Lieutenant hourly rate and not the Chief's hourly rate. Lt. Tabaranza's compensation as the Police Chief is approximately 35% less per hour than Chief Morin's current salary structure. We anticipate savings from Chief Morin's retirement would offset the potential increase in overtime shift costs. Staff will have a better idea of the costs during the mid-year review in March 2021.