

Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Minutes of the Committee-of-the-Whole
February 12, 2024

Members: Mr. Balthis, Chair
Mr. Ashton
Mr. Brillhart
Mr. DeRemer
Mr. James
Ms. Loza
Ms. Nichols-Rhodes
Mrs. Penta
Mr. Siegfert
Mrs. Spinner
Mr. Stams

Mr. Balthis called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m. All members were present.

Discussion:

Mayor Don Walters presented his selection of Captain Christopher Norfolk as the City's next Police Chief. Council was provided with Captain Norfolk's letter of interest and resume.

Mayor Walters stated that Chief Davis's last day will be the February 29. The new chief will take the helm on March 1, at midnight. In the 102 years of the police force, this will only be the 12th chief. He is recommending Captain Christopher Norfolk, who is in the audience tonight. Per the charter, they have already conducted the interview and testing process. The final step is Council confirmation. Captain Norfolk was hired as a police officer in December of 2001, promoted to sergeant in May of 2005, promoted to lieutenant in November of 2018 and then Captain in August of 2020. Captain Norfolk has had extensive training and has extensive qualifications. He is a graduate of The Ohio State University Public Safety Leadership Academy; the FBI-LEEDA Trilogy Award; Ohio Association Chief's of Police, Police Executive Leadership College; Institute of Police Technology and Management Certification – Honorary Associates; University of Akron, Associate of Science, Criminal Justice. Captain Norfolk is a certified OPOTA Firearms Instructor; certified through the Dolan Group - Diversity in Recruiting And Hiring for Law Enforcement; certified through NOTA, SWAT Command And Leadership and is an OTOA Below 100 instructor. Mayor Walters respectfully asked Council to confirm his appointment of Captain Norfolk as Police Chief.

Captain Norfolk expressed his gratitude to God for leading him to this place and for the Mayor and his confidence. He looks forward to moving along with this and is anxious to get to work.

Mr. Balthis asked Captain Norfolk what he hopes to be his biggest accomplishment as he looks to the future and what the different challenges will be in the next five years. Captain Norfolk stated that there are a couple things that are high on his priority list. He believes that they can leverage technology to better serve the citizens and guests of the community, especially in the investigative side of the law enforcement. Council has been in support of that when it recently approved the installation of a Flock Camera System in Cuyahoga Falls. Relationship-wise, one of the biggest

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challenges in law enforcement is recruiting and retention. He has plans for what is called Boundary Spanning Initiative to build relationships not just at the top level at the station, but to push them down to midlevel management and for the police officers to realize how the decisions they make impact the people in the community and how they all work together to move the City forward. He has youth membership things to work with the school district and some recruiting. The plan he has is to have a trade school model for bringing kids that are interested in professional law enforcement. There is a gap between the time a kid that is interested in the profession graduates high school and the time he could become a police officer. He would like to bridge that and bring them into the fold where they can help bring them into what they do and bring them into the profession someday.

Mr. Balthis stated that, a lot of times, officers face exceedingly difficult situations. There are situations that they have entered into, trauma they have come across and have seen horrible things happen. It is hard for people to seek out help, counseling, and guidance. It seems like, in a profession like law enforcement, there is sometimes resistance. He has spoken with Chief Davis about it. It is always important that they make sure that type of support is there for the officers to help keep them performing their best for everybody's sake. He appreciates the work that Captain Norfolk has been doing for the 20-some years that he has been with the department and looks forward to the future.

Ms. Nichols-Rhodes stated that she is impressed with what he is planning with youth. Some of the things about Chief Davis's leadership that impressed her are the comprehensive, ongoing training and the stringent hiring practices. She recalls Chief Davis talking about Blue Courage, a transformational process that focuses on the human development of police/corrections/detention officers, and being happy that that is something that officers learn about. It is impressive that Captain Norfolk is currently an instructor, and that he supports all the things that she finds impressive about what has been implemented in the Police Department. She supports his appointment and thanked him for being up for the job.

Mr. James moved to approve Mayor Walters' selection of Captain Christopher Norfolk as Police Chief, second by Mr. Brillhart. Motion passed, voice vote (11-0).

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.