

Attachment "A" 1-17-12 Regular Council Min
Memo to Council

Date: January 13, 2012

Discussion: On January 3rd, I interviewed all of the police officers for the position of Police Chief. Questions were presented by the City Administrator, the Sheriff and me. In addition to the candidate and the panel asking questions was John Huisman. They were asked about ten questions. Following the questions, the candidates were given time to ask questions or make further comments about their qualifications for the police chief position. An hour was set up for each interview.

It was my opinion after the interviews that Tom Fletcher was the best candidate for Police Chief. He did the excellent job of answering the questions. Officer Fletcher has 13 years of experience with the police department. His relationship with the sheriff's office and his other officers appeared to be excellent. He has developed and written classes for police officers in the areas of Use of Force, Defensive Tactics, Firearms, AR 15 instructor, and Force on Force Simunition instructor. Officer Fletcher indicated that he would work to make the police department and the city council relationships better. He also indicated that we need to do a better job with kids through DARE and bicycle safety. He also emphasized programs on child seat restraint classes and programs to help seniors avoid being victims of crime. Finally, Tom emphasized the need to continue to make sure that the police department did a professional job. It should be further added that Tom Fletcher is the third generation of police officers who have served Blue Earth. Both his father and grandfather had been Sheriff's of Faribault County.

It was obvious from the interview of the three candidates that they had worked together extremely well since the departure of the Dean Veriede. They appeared to be very supportive of each other as candidates for the position and exhibited a desire to work with the individual who was approved by the council.

With the exception of one reference, following the interviews, I contacted some of the references and also contacted other professionals that had worked with our officers. The references were very supportive of Tom Fletcher as Police Chief. They were very complementary of his professionalism and his ability. The contacts also indicated that Tom would help to improve the relations between the Sheriff's office and the Blue Earth Police Department. (It should be emphasized that many of the

contacts spoke very well of all of our officers. This included the preparation for court proceeding and testimony.) There were no serious negatives from anyone contacted.

In the course of the interviews, one of the issues raised was the fact that, depending on how the council handled it, any officer who took the police chief position that it would result in a cut in pay. The main discrepancy was the difference in the insurance costs for an officer under the union contract and as a supervisor. To make up this difference, we are recommending moving Tom Fletcher to the third step for the Police Chief position.

The second area raised was vacation time. Office Fletcher has earned vacation days each year in excess of being an entry level Police Chief. It is my opinion if we are going to hire within that we not take the vacation time he has for each year and make him start over at an entry level. Therefore, I would recommend letting Officer Fletcher keep his vacation level at the same rate as when he was an officer.

With the change in pay level and the continuance of vacations time at the same level as he was at as an officer, I would be appointing Tom Fletcher to be Police Chief for the City of Blue Earth subject to approval by the City Council. While I appreciate Tom Fletchers appointment has not been confirmed by the council, we discussed the importance of him going to the Police Chief course that is offered. Tom is registered for training at the end of the month and he won the lottery so the police chief training would be tuition free.