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### **Tanksley Named Chief of Police**

Deputy Chief Rick C. Tanksley, a 17-year veteran of the Oak Park Police Department, has been selected as the new Chief of Police, Village Manager Carl Swenson announced Thursday.

Tanksley will succeed Joseph M. Mendrick who will retire in June after 35 years with the Oak Park Police Department.

One of four final candidates interviewed after a national search, Tanksley, a principal architect of the Village's Community Policing Program, offered the perfect combination of training and experience, according to Swenson, who called the deputy chief an "ideal choice" for such a critical Village post.

"The Village was fortunate to have had a choice among several outstanding candidates. Rick Tanksley rose above the best candidates in the country," Swenson said. "His accomplishments, professionalism and strong leadership skills were clearly evident during the interview process."

Tanksley, 47, joined the Oak Park Police Department in April of 1984. He quickly rose through the ranks to sergeant and commander, before becoming deputy chief in 1993. A long-time Oak Park resident, Tanksley holds a bachelor's degree from Concordia University and a master's degree in social work from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

"Being offered the opportunity to become Chief of Police of a community like Oak Park is a great honor," Tanksley said. "I am excited and privileged to have been selected from among what I know to have been several extremely well-qualified candidates."

Tanksley said that while he is eager to get started in his new role, he also is saddened to know that the opportunity means the loss of Chief Mendrick.

"Joe Mendrick has proven himself to be a successful police executive," Tanksley said. "He has been my friend and mentor. I am confident in my ability to live up to the standards we as a department have established."

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Tanksley was chosen for the top police post after an extensive, six-month national search. Thirty-plus community members and Village staff worked with the Oldani Group, Inc., one of the most experienced law enforcement executive recruiters in the country, to develop a clear view of the recruitment needs of the Village and create a profile for the new chief. Using this profile, Oldani identified 38 candidates from which the finalists were selected for interviews.

The finalists – two from the Midwest, one from the East coast and one from the Southwest – were interviewed last week by a team consisting of Swenson, senior Village executives and representatives of various community organizations.

Chief Mendrick praised the selection of Tanksley as his replacement, calling his long-time deputy an exceptional police officer and leader.

“In my years working with Deputy Chief Tanksley he has demonstrated time and time again the qualities and judgment necessary to lead a department of law enforcement officers of the caliber we have in Oak Park,” Mendrick said.

“The fact that he could outdo any other candidate from any other police department comes as no surprise to me. But being selected as part of a national search provides a level of credibility that might not have come had the selection process been limited just to the department here. I had to go through the same type of process.”

Swenson said Tanksley’s status as a resident, long-time veteran of the Oak Park Police force and understudy of Chief Mendrick were added bonuses, not determining factors.

“Rick Tanksley proved himself to be the best candidate for the job,” Swenson said. “He went head-to-head with some of the best police officers in the country and came out the clear winner. The residents of Oak Park deserve nothing but the best in their chief and I am confident that is exactly what they will get when Rick takes over the helm of the department.”

As for future plans, Tanksley said he intends to use the programs created by Chief Mendrick as a foundation for taking the Police Department to the next level of community service.

“I believe that the key to building and maintaining a superior police force is being able to work closely with the community, anticipate changing needs and adapt accordingly,” he said. “That is the mindset that will guide my actions as chief.”

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### **Police Chief Recruitment Profile Development Group**

- ~~/~~ Dr. Sue Bridge, Oak Park-River Forest High School Superintendent
- ~~/~~ Diane Carpenter, Austin Boulevard Alliance
- ~~/~~ Loretta Daly, Oak Park-River Forest Chamber of Commerce
- ~~/~~ Dr. Jack Fagan, District #97 Superintendent
- ~~/~~ Laurie Huget, League of Women Voters
- ~~/~~ Wynetta Johnson, A.P.P.L.E.
- ~~/~~ Julie Kreiner and Susan Abbott, OPALGA
- ~~/~~ Donna Ogden-Jermal, Downtown Oak Park
- ~~/~~ Walter Perkins, N.A.A.C.P.
- ~~/~~ Rev. Randolph Thompson, Fellowship Christian Center
- ~~/~~ John Williams, Township Youth Services Director
- ~~/~~ Police Chief Joseph Mendrick
- ~~/~~ Police Commander Anthony Ambrose
- ~~/~~ Police Commander Michael Keenan
- ~~/~~ Police Commander Frank Kennedy
- ~~/~~ Officer Michael Lepzynski, FOP
- ~~/~~ Police Commander Robert Scianna
- ~~/~~ Deputy Chief Rickie Tanksley
- ~~/~~ Deputy Chief Richard Toll
- ~~/~~ Sgt. Michael Vitale, Sergeants and Lieutenants Association
- ~~/~~ Dorothy Whitley, Crossing Guard Supervisor
- ~~/~~ Police Commander Keenan Williams
- ~~/~~ Fire Chief Gerald Beeson
- ~~/~~ Battalion Chief William Bell
- ~~/~~ Battalion Chief Thomas Ebsen
- ~~/~~ Battalion Chief Mark Fabbri
- ~~/~~ Battalion Chief George Lazewski
- ~~/~~ Deputy Chief Clifford Hansen
- ~~/~~ Deputy Chief Mark Puknaitis
- ~~/~~ Carl Swenson, Village Manager
- ~~/~~ M. Ray Wiggins, Assistant Village Manager
- ~~/~~ Joseph Euclide, Public Works Director
- ~~/~~ Raymond Heise, Village Attorney
- ~~/~~ Rogene Hill, Community Services Director
- ~~/~~ Elizabeth Monroe-Cook, Fire and Police Commission Chair
- ~~/~~ Greg Peters, Finance Director
- ~~/~~ Gregg Riddle, West Suburban Consolidated Dispatch Center Director.
- ~~/~~ Morris Seeskin, Citizen's Police Oversight Committee Chair
- ~~/~~ Sandra Sokol, Village Clerk

### **Finalists Interview Panel Members**

- ?? John Williams, Township Youth Services Director
- ?? Dr. Jack Fagan, District 97 Superintendent
- ?? Sherlynn Reid, N.A.A.C.P. member and former Community Relations Director
- ?? Jim Doss, Oak Park and River Forest Chamber of Commerce Executive Director
- ?? Gregg Riddle, West Suburban Consolidated Dispatch Center Director
- ?? Carl Swenson, Village Manager
- ?? M. Ray Wiggins, Assistant Village Manager
- ?? Rodney Marion, Human Resources Director
- ?? Rogene Hill, Community Services Director
- ?? Joseph Euclide, Public Works Director
- ?? Georgeen Polyak, Health Director
- ?? Fire Chief Gerald Beeson

(Sue Bridge, Oak Park-River Forest High School Superintendent, and Ozzie Bruno, Fire and Police Commission Chair, were invited to participate in the finalists interviews, but had scheduling conflicts.)