

'Interim' tag removed from Town of Niagara police chief's title, as Guiliani settles in permanently

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Contributing Writer

Following his first attempt at the New York state civil service exam for police chiefs and assistant chiefs, Craig Guiliani made a deal with the Town of Niagara's human resources director.

Essentially, he said, it was to tell him if he passed. And, if not, to keep it to herself.

She'd find out before him, he figured. And, sure enough, she did.

Then the phone rang a few weeks ago, Guiliani said. He was in his car when he answered. He connected to the call hesitantly. She asked if he was sitting down, he said, stressing a sullen tone when recalling the events. Suddenly, she delivered the news he'd been longing to hear.

"I must've punched the (ceiling) of that car so many times," he said Wednesday, after the Town of Niagara Board approved his permanent appointment as chief of his hometown police force.

To say he was excited that afternoon is an understatement, for sure. And his excitement level has only increased since. He's served as interim police chief since his appointment in September, after former Chief James Sutor retired.

But, for Guiliani, the department has always been where he belonged. His family connections run deep, with roots going back to his great-grandfather in the days before the department was even, well, a department.

His uncles and other family members served the town in similar capacities.

The badges from those days – including his great-grandfather's as chief constable in the 1950s and 1960s, arranged on a corner table in his office – remind him of the legacy he's there to uphold, he said.

And build upon.

"I've never wanted anything other than to work here," Guiliani said. "To finish my career here. It's surreal that it actually came true, that I passed this test on my first try and I'm here."

It wasn't a particularly difficult exam, he said, but the effort Guiliani put into preparing made it feel monumental. It started in the fall, shortly after assuming the interim role. He ramped up his



Town of Niagara Police Chief Craig Guiliani admires his great-grandfather's police badge, which sits as part of a display of family members' accomplishments in the department throughout the years. Guiliani was named the town's next chief, a title he's held in interim since September, at Wednesday's Town Board meeting.

studying time as the weeks progressed through the winter.

Then, the day of the test arrived. Confident he was ready, but convinced he could benefit from a few more hours of preparation, Guiliani said he showed up to the parking lot of the exam building at 6 a.m. and reviewed one last time while sitting in his vehicle.

After he finished the exam, he said he walked out of the room confident, like he'd aced the test and was ready to become the town's next full-time chief of police. Then a little doubt crept in.

And a little more. And a little more.

As the weeks progressed and results still weren't available, he said he began second-guessing his answers.

Suddenly, he wasn't confident at all. Guiliani, it turns out, had nothing to worry about. And, he said, neither does the town and its small police force.

He sees his job as an opportunity to give back to the community. Where his predecessor advanced the department in a lot of electronics and investigations through computers, Guiliani said he wants to see the department return to more of a community policing venture meant to help ease some tensions that have developed between police and community members.

At the same time, though, Guiliani

said he recognizes the world is different than what it was even 10 years ago. And the department isn't able to be out there doing positive things as often as he'd like.

"We're very busy," he said. "We can't be in the community the way we used to be. There's nothing I want more than to slow down the traffic on our streets and get the illegal (all-terrain vehicles) off the streets. But it's not the same community it was 10 years ago, 20 years ago."

Guiliani said he has one other wish for the department, which may help boost internal morale a bit: get a K-9 unit, giving the officers something to look forward to.

In addition to formally hiring the new police chief, the Town Board on Wednesday also:

- ✓ Approved a moratorium on the construction of wind and solar farms in the town, which will be in effect for six months. It allows the next Town Board, which will be chosen by voters in November, the ability to proceed how it wants, according to proponents of the moratorium;

- ✓ Increased the rate of pay for all town seasonal employees by \$0.50 per hour to \$16.50 per hour throughout the summer season;

- ✓ Accepted the town's external fiscal audit for the past year, prepared by accounting firm Drescher & Malecki.

LEWISTON POLICE BLOTTER

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investigation – Officer initiated call. Patrol reported ATVs in area heading northbound. Officer not pursuing.

• **800 block of Center Street, MVA-property damage** – Caller to 911 reported a two-vehicle accident. Patrol responded; vehicles towed.

• **900 block of Center Street, shoplifting** – Call by alarm provider of a male shoplifting. Patrols stated the subject had previously trespassed on premises. Male taken into custody and taken to Niagara County Sheriff's Office Jail on multiple warrants. Report taken.

• **4700 block of Creek Road, noise complaint** – Caller to

911 reported fireworks in the area; patrol checked with negative results. Caller advised to re-contact if fireworks resume.

• **Locations at 700 block of Powell Lane and E. Eddy/Raymond drives, ordinance violations** – Callers reported fireworks in area. Patrols responded.

• **400 block of Onondaga Street, domestic disturbance** – 911 complaint; patrols responded.

• **Locations at I-190/Upper Mountain Road; and the Niagara Scenic Parkway/Ridge Road, vehicle/traffic stops** – Calls officer initiated.

• **Violations per stop were driver cited for violation of move-over**

law and imprudent speed; and driver, speed in zone, vehicle clocked at 91 mph in a 55 mph zone. Uniform traffic tickets issued for Lewiston Town Court. Patrol issued a warning to one driver for a violation.

Sunday, June 18

• **800 block of Foxwood Drive assist public** – Patrol spoke with resident regarding an ongoing issue of a neighbor's dog relieving itself nearby and the dog's owner not addressing issue. Patrol advised to file a report with the property manager.

• **1900 block of Saunders Settlement Road, noise complaint** – Caller to 911 reported loud noise in area; neighbor playing guitar. Patrols responded.

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