

Progress

Lauhoff has seen city grow, change

BY CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

Since coming to the city of Farmington 18 years ago, public safety director Frank Lauhoff has worked his way to the top.

And although city council members were careful last week not to compare management styles of Lauhoff and current City Manager Robert Deadman, both rose through virtually the same ranks to earn the city's top job.

Starting as a public safety officer in 1974, Lauhoff worked his way up to the rank of sergeant/commander in 1978, was promoted to deputy director of the department in 1982 and was finally made chief of the police and fire operation in September of 1984.

Since then, he has become adept in handling the city's largest department budget, worked on the management negotiating team for six contracts for his agency's three unions, reorganized the public safety department, redesigned the public safety offices and equipment, and stayed abreast of legislative issues affecting the public safety area.

In discussing his experience in



Frank Lauhoff

running the city's largest department, Lauhoff shared his feelings about, and loyalties to, the city during an interview with city council last week.

"It's important to me to see that the city continue along in a progressive way," he told the council. "I have a desire to be part of that."

"I don't know what it is about the city — it kind of grows with you, or you," he added.

Lauhoff will move from his at-

tachment head post to a job with a written contract and which will be answerable to five elected members of the council. Lauhoff said he did not feel the transition from one to multiple bosses would be a difficult one. "I believe that everyone's input is necessary . . . and important whether it's dealing with a problem or a program," he said. Lauhoff said he plans to heavily involve city department heads at the council level.

He also plans to address a number of what he called "detail things" including prevention of blight and litter which can be a detriment to older communities, and addressing neighborhood concerns "to keep this city a jewel of the suburban communities."

Lauhoff was born and raised on the east side and moved to Farmington in 1977. He and his wife Vicki, who recently celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary, live in the Chatham Hill subdivision with their two daughters who attend Farmington Public Schools.

Lauhoff holds bachelor of science and associate's degrees in criminal justice from Madonna University in Livonia. Locally, he is active with

the Farmington Optimists.

He also has management training in the areas of public administration, emergency management and employee selection and rights.

Lauhoff said he would run the city in the same style of openness which he has used in the public safety arena — something that is often not the case with many police agencies. "I've tried to change that perception," he added.

Although proud of his accomplishments in the police area, which include heading up the Oakland County chiefs group in 1988 and his current term on the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police board of directors, he is pleased with the confidence shown by the council. "I'm proud of what I've achieved," he said. "But there's a lot more to be done and a lot more to be achieved."

Moving Lauhoff to the city manager's post will leave a prime vacancy in the public safety department — something that will likely be handled by the new city manager who will make a recommendation for hiring to the city council.

Commission chief changes his mind

BY CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

The chairman of the Farmington Planning Commission said he has changed his opinion about the appointment of an internal candidate to the city manager's post, after talking with council members this week.

Chairman James Pogue, who last week voiced his concern about the city council's search inside city hall for a replacement for Robert Deadman, said he has spoken with two city council members since he raised the concern. Those discussions with Mayor William Hartsock and councilwoman Shirley Richardson revolved specifically around Frank Lauhoff, the prime candidate for the city manager's post who was offered the job Monday.

"I've gotten really a different slant on the whole thing than I had before," he said, adding that Lauhoff's close association with Deadman over the years is key to the success of the appointment.

"I'm much more satisfied," he added. "I feel he probably is a really good choice."

Richardson said Monday she had spoken with Pogue, and added that she sensed his change of heart. "After a lengthy discussion, he very much concurred . . . that we were on the right track and doing the right thing," she said.

Richardson said the council had received one other letter from a resident concerned about the inside search process.

She cautioned everyone, including fellow council members, not to compare the current and future managers. "We need to be very cautious, not only that we don't compare, but those on our boards and commissions and the community do the same," she added.

Pogue had said he was concerned about the scope of the internal search, and that the council was possibly rushing the appointment.

City manager from page 1A

Councilwoman Shirley Richardson concurred. "We cannot compare Mr. Lauhoff to Mr. Bob Deadman," she said. "He needs the time, just like Mr. Deadman needed when he came on board."

Councilman Tupper made the motion to offer Lauhoff the position, as he had at an earlier meeting. At that time, the council considered the motion premature, and Tupper withdrew it. But Tupper said he had no doubts, and had considered Lauhoff the likely candidate for many months. "Dedication deserves reward," he added.

Councilman Arnold Campbell said he was "very sure" of the appointment, saying Lauhoff has "a commitment to Farmington."

Despite her vocal support of doing a more widespread search in recent weeks, councilwoman JoAnne McShane said she also supported Lauhoff's appointment. "I think he's an excellent candidate," she added.

Council watcher and longtime Farmington resident Bill Liba, who sat through Monday's meeting, told the council: "You're making a good choice. From what I'm getting out in the community, this is the way to go."

Local merchant Skip Rosenthal, who also attended a portion of the meeting, commented that in other cities in which he has done business, there were some problems with "inbreeding" of ideas after internal promotions. But he did not decry the council's action. "I'm finding more and more in life that no decisions are ever easy," he said.

Tupper added: "I want the people of our community to know this board had not made a rash decision. We have searched our souls."

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