Plan for picking sheriff takes shape

BY PAT MURPHY STAFF WRITER pmurphy@ce.homecomm.net

The new Oakland County sheriff could be named as early as Jan. 11, according to the three-member Vacaney Committee charged with naming a successor to the late John F. Nichols who died Dec. 18.

The committee met for the first time Monday at which time it elected prosecutor David Goreyca chair and established the procedure for selecting the new sheriff.

Prospective candidates are expected to submit applications—including a letter of intent, a gayme and a list of short-andlong-term goals—to the clerk's Gifec by 5 pn. Tuesday, Jan. 5.

The committee will begin interviewing candidates at 9:30 a.m. on Jan. 11, after which the committee will deliberate and, quite possibly, name the new sheriff, according to Goreyca, who with county clerk G. William Caddell and chief probake judge Eugene Arthur Moore make up the Vacaney Committee.

County union supports Buffa

BY PAT MURPHY STAFF WRITER murphyCoe.homecomm.net

The intense race to replace the late John F. Nichols got underway in earnest Monday when a spokesperson for a county employees union endorseal undersheriff Henry Buffa as the next Oakland County Sheriff. The endorsement came during the initial meeting of the Vacancy Committee that could name the new sheriff as early as Jan. 11.

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11.

Mary Price, a trustee for the Oakland County Employees Union, told the committee the 650-member union supports Buffa, who has been the number two command officer within the department since July, 1993.

Price did not specify any reasons for the union's endorsement. Privately, however, she said Buffa's knowledge of the department and administrative exportise would "help heal wonds within the department." Friee, an outspoken critic of John Nichola, said those wounds yearled from what she described derthe hursh disciplinary policies established and maintained by the late sheriff.

1'' know about those wounds," Price said, because I often represented deputies accused of physometric words and the committee didn't ask for ondorsements. But Price said her union wanted its preferences known. "I hope other unions Quah as the Deputy Sheriffs' Affacciation) make their views known too," she said.

Buffa is one of the two names most commonly mentioned as possible successors to Nichols. The other is State Sen. Michael Bouchard, R-Birmingham, who was a police officer for about 12 years before going into politics. Members of the Vacancy Committee, — Prosecutor David Gorcyca, county clerk G. William Caddell and Chief Probate judge Eugene Arthur Moore — emphasized they will consider every qualified applicant. But speculation abounds that Bouchard is the odds-on front runner, with Buffa second and Major Thomas E. Quisenberry, the department third.

ment's chief of staff, a distant third.

Others said to be interested in being the new sheriff include Gerard Carlin, a former sheriffs captain who ran against Nichols in the 1998 Republican primary former Michigan State Police commander Matthew Hogan of White Lake, who ran against Nichols as a Democrat in 1996, and Southfield Police Chief Joseph E. Thomas.

About 16 people, including five reporters, attended Monday's meeting. Among them were the newly elected chair of the Oak-Disease of Monday's meeting. Among them were the newly elected chair of the Oak-Disease of Monday's meeting.

"If we need another day, we'll take it," said Caddell. "But quite possibly we'll name the new sheriff on the 11th."

This is believed to be the first time in Oakhand County history that a committee — rather than the electorise — is selecting a sheriff, and Goreya emphasized there is no set procedure. select a successor, but the law doesn't specify a

David Gorcyca Vacancy Committee

from that or any other county is advisory, said Caddell. "We're plowing our own new ground,"

he said.
The need for swift, but not The need for swit, but the hasty action to appoint a new sheriff was underscored during the public comment part of the meeting by Dale Cunningham, the sheriff department's business manager. Cunningham reminded the committee of three pressing matters that he said

would seem to necessitate prompt action on selecting the new sheriff.

Those pressing matters are, Cunningham said, an ongoing study into staffing needs, authorized by the board of commissioners; an investigation into the department's policies on providing medical care for immates; and jail overcrowding.

The committee, however, indi-



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