

NEWS RELEASE

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Illinois State Police Deputy Director Named Next DeKalb Police Chief

A deputy director of the Illinois State Police who embraces community engagement has been selected as the City of DeKalb's next Chief of Police.

David Byrd, a Colonel with the Illinois State Police and the agency's Deputy Director of the Division of Patrol, was recommended as DeKalb's next police chief by a Community Search Committee. Their recommendation was strongly supported by City Manager Bill Nicklas, and Byrd's hiring received the unanimous consent of the DeKalb City Council Monday night.

In introducing Byrd, Nicklas said the next police chief is a dynamic leader with a remarkable depth in law enforcement as well as community involvement.

"Our background work has revealed that he is a hands-on leader who prefers to meet and engage the communities he serves face-to-face, and in the locations and spaces where residents are most comfortable," said Nicklas. "We have learned many things in the past year and we are still learning about what connects us and separates us in this City. Building bridges is the order of the day, and that begins with familiarity which can invite trust and, if we are fortunate, mutual respect."

Byrd, who spent time in DeKalb working with DeKalb and NIU Police during homecoming, says he jumped at the chance to put in his application for police chief.

"I think DeKalb, right now, is doing an amazing job with the programs they have in place to engage the community. I'm here to act as a force multiplier for that," said Byrd. "I'm looking forward to meeting with the community and being invested in whatever I can do as the head of the Police Department to make life better for the community and all of the officers of the DeKalb Police Department."

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A 31-year veteran of the Illinois State Police, Byrd was appointed as Deputy Director of the Division of Patrol on Aug. 1, 2020. Before his latest appointment, Byrd was a Lieutenant Colonel, serving as the Assistant Deputy Director for the Office of the Director; a Major, serving as the Northern Region Commander; and a Captain, serving as the Commander of District Chicago. Byrd was born and raised on the southside of Chicago. He attended Grambling State University in Grambling, Louisiana, where he majored in Criminal Justice.

Byrd was chosen as DeKalb's next police chief following a rigorous selection process that was temporarily halted by COVID-19 and then restarted in November so it could reflect significant policing reforms adopted by the City Council, including creation of a Community Support Services Division within the Police Department.

The seven-member Community Search Committee narrowed 27 applicants to six candidates for initial interviews. Two candidates then took part in an intense day of final interviews on Thursday, March 3.

The two finalists were first interviewed by two panels. One panel was made up of local law enforcement leaders from DeKalb County, Sycamore and NIU along with Third Ward Alderman Tracy Smith. City employees comprised the second panel, including representatives from the City's three collective bargaining groups and management.

Each candidate then had an hour-long interview with City Manager Nicklas before being interviewed by the Community Search Committee

That was followed by back-to-back hour-long sessions at the Egyptian Theatre where the finalists addressed the members of the DeKalb Police Department. Each candidate gave a brief presentation followed by an unscripted question-and-answer session for the remainder of the hour.

Byrd was the unanimous recommendation of the Community Search Committee in a final meeting Thursday night.

Committee member Earnell Brown, a local Black Lives Matter organizer and the Executive Director of the Sir Donald Foundation says Byrd's name continued to rise to the top during the search process.

"We chose who we believe is the right man for the job here in DeKalb. We didn't choose a police chief. We chose who we needed for DeKalb's police chief," said Brown.

During the search, the Police Department has been led by Acting Chief Bob Redel. Nicklas says the City has been very fortunate to have Redel serving in this role.

"His knowledge of our community, the department, and the times helped him guide the

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department through ten months of sweeping institutional reform, from the department's essential operating procedures, to body cams, to new training goals, and to the reconfiguration of department divisions to bring more resources to community engagement, community policing, behavioral health, and community wellness calls for service," said Nicklas. "Dave Byrd will find Bob to be a creative and earnest partner as he takes the reins."

The City of DeKalb also thanks the members of the Community Search Committee, listed below, for their contributions to this important process.

- Earnell Brown, Founder and Executive Director of the Sir Donald Foundation, Black Lives Matter organizer
- John Walker, youth mentor and long-time resident, DeKalb Human Relations Commission member
- Glenn Roby, Phi Sigma Kappa NIU Chapter Advisor, Annie Glidden North Board member
- Monique Bernoudy, NIU Assistant Vice President of Academic Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Lisa King, Interim Co-director of the NIU CHANCE program, DeKalb Township Trustee, DeKalb Human Relations Commission member
- Will Heinisch, DeKalb Area Rental Association President
- Mike Pittsley, owner, Pittsley Realty; Annie Glidden North Board member
- Don Thomas, retired Sycamore Police Chief

Byrd's first official day on the job will be May 1.

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