

MAYOR'S COLUMN

One of the major tasks for Village government Fall 2007 is the selection, hiring and training of seven additional officers for the Bronxville police force. The Trustees' goal is to reach the full complement of 23 officers for our department by the first of the year. Due to the long awaited release of a new Civil Service list, we have over 140 candidates in the applicant pool compared with 4 throughout the spring and summer. This is our window of opportunity and we are moving aggressively to canvas the list and discern the most desirable candidates as expeditiously as possible.

By the end of this week, Village officials will have conducted short interviews with 60 potential hires and distributed our extensive written application to same.

Upon return of the completed application, we will begin a process of verifying information, checking references and beginning background checks.

We are fortunate in that the large pool of applicants is a diverse and talented one. We have met with female candidates, Spanish speaking applicants, veteran officers seeking transfer from other departments and young rookies seeking initial employment.

After the written applications have been vetted, we will narrow the pool to a manageable size, conduct lengthy personal interviews and complete the extensive background checks required.

Fortunately, most officers we hire serve their entire law enforcement career with the Village so these decisions take on even added importance. We are seeking officers who blend the finest police skills with the personal skills needed to work in a small village such as ours.

Due to the requirements of the Civil Service System, the health physical and required agility test cannot be administered until all of the above mentioned procedures have been completed and a formal offer of employment has been extended. So the frustrating possibility does exist that we could lose an officer with an unforeseen physical limitation after months of review and consideration.

After a candidate has passed the final physical tests, formal training can begin. If a rookie, he or she must attend the Westchester County Police Academy is next available class convening in January and graduate in early spring. If the officer is a veteran of another force, he or she will be partnered with a mentor from our force until fully acclimated to the job.

Based on the ratio in the applicant pool, we anticipate our eventual hires to be a combination of rookies and veteran transfers. Our starting salary, depending on experience, is very competitive.

A fully staffed police department will provide many benefits to the Village. Our current officers will be required to do less overtime and the new officers will assume patrolman duties allowing us to fill currently vacant leadership positions and advance our veteran officers.

Increased staffing will also allow us to have a regularized schedule of traffic and speed control officers on the road. Our business district foot and bike patrol positions will also have more consistent staffing.

Chief Downey has announced that he will be officially retiring on November 19th so we will also be choosing a new leader for the entire department.

We are mindful that by adding so many officers, we have the opportunity to shape this department for years to come and must choose wisely.

Our goal is to offer an employment package, training and leadership opportunities and a working environment that will distinguish our police force as a pre-eminent place to work in Westchester County in the years ahead.