

# Candidates for Venice police chief whittled down

By GREG GILES NEWS EDITOR VENICE GONDOLIER

Venice officials have closed the application window to fill the position of police chief.

Former City Manager Isaac Turner made the decision to close the application process, which had been open-ended, on Jan. 24 after receiving nearly 300 applications. Half the applications were received in the first week of advertising, and they had dropped off sharply after that, according to the human resources department.

The city received 298 resumes. This week acting City Manager Nancy Woodley whittled that down to 31 “qualified” applicants.

The first round of screening was conducted based on council’s criteria that candidates meet certain minimum requirements, have a certain amount of law enforcement experience, command experience (captain or above) and possible experience as police chief or assistant chief, as well as Florida experience.

All but two who made it to the next round of screening have Florida experience.

Those applications go next to a selection committee consisting of Fire Chief John Reed, Administration Director Alan Bullock and Woodley. Once that group makes its short list, the city council will make the final determination of whom to interview for the job.

Former Venice Police Chief Julie Williams, who was forced to resign last year, was one of the applicants, but was disqualified because her application was received Feb. 11, more than two weeks after the application window was closed. Williams could not be reached for comment. She has previously declined to comment on her resignation.

Local prospects making the first cut were Capt. Thomas McNulty, longtime VPD officer, and Terry Lewis, North Port’s police chief and acting city manager, who lives in Venice.

Some of those who didn’t make the cut include: David Gustafson, who formerly ran for Sarasota County sheriff; Peter Abbott, former police chief of the city of Sarasota; Lt. John Kost, with the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office; and Chuck Lesaltato, former media liaison for the Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office and now court services deputy.

Acting Police Chief Dave Dunaway did not apply.

ggiles@venicegondolier.com