

Wednesday, July 15, 2009

Fire district taps Sherbaugh for chief

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When it was all said and done, the Nehalem Bay Fire and Rescue District Board of Directors decided to hire from within, selecting Manzanita Department of Public Safety Chief Perry Sherbaugh as the district's new fire chief.

The board offered the position to Sherbaugh following an all-day assessment session and interview process on July 7, during which a field of four candidates was ultimately narrowed to one.

Sherbaugh's selection is contingent on a successful background check and contract negotiations, and, "if there is no hitches in the process," the board expects Sherbaugh to be on the job sometime in early August, according to board president John Steele.

Of the 16 who applied for the position, five candidates were selected to be interviewed. One withdrew, leaving four individuals who participated in the selection process that involved a series of interviews with eleven citizens from the Nehalem Bay area and fire officials from other fire districts on the north coast.

Perry Sherbaugh

"It was an all-encompassing effort. We did what I thought was a very thorough process of vetting candidates," said Steele. "We looked at each one very closely."

The board interviewed three finalists in the afternoon, who Steele said were "very close" in terms of their experience.

Interim fire chief Roy Palmer, who will remain on the job until Sherbaugh officially assumes the role as fire chief, agreed with Steele.

"The process went very well. We had a lot of positive comments regarding it," he said.

In the final analysis, the board tabbed Sherbaugh because "he had the experience relative to our requirements locally," Steele said. "He won't have the learning curve someone else would and can hit the ground running."

Sherbaugh, up until June when Palmer was named interim chief of the new fire district, had split his time with the city of Manzanita as its fire and police chief, serving as chief officer of the Manzanita Department of Public Safety for the past 11 years. Before that, he served the area as a volunteer fire chief and paid police officer. He first joined the fire department in 1987 as a volunteer firefighter.

With Sherbaugh's selection, Manzanita City Manager Jerry Taylor now begins the task of looking for a new police chief for the city.

"We'll be looking at our options and will be filling that position in the next few weeks," said Taylor. "I'm sorry to lose Perry as part of the city's organization, but happy he will continue to serve the Nehalem Bay area in his new position."

Said Steele, "After looking at the candidates very closely, we think we've selected the person who will do the best job for the district."