

City of Rock Falls

603 W. 10th Street
Rock Falls, IL 61071-2854

The City Council of the City of Rock Falls held a Committee Of the Whole September 30, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of discussing: Chief of Police replacement.

Present were Mayor Klecker, Alderman McKanna, Wangelin, Byrd, Doane, Dowd, Stahr, Arduini, and Sobottka. In addition, Deputy Chief Wolber, Attorney Matt Cole and City Clerk Pam Martinez.

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kleckler.

Roll Call was called by City Clerk Pam Martinez

Audience requests:

- Detective Sergeant Jeremy Vondra gave council members a copy of a petition that was signed by 17 out of 20 officers of the Rock Falls Police department against the hiring of the new Police Chief from outside sources when there are qualified applicants inside of the department. Long term benefit and morale to stay within the department when there are qualified applicants that have submitted resumes.
- Sergeant Ryan McKanna spoke about serving the community within the current police force. Asked to have a fair consideration for those that have applied for the position.
- Amy Stoeckel – Administrative Assistant – Loyalty should be rewarded, and she is proud to work for the Police department for 19 years. Hire from qualified applicants.
- Joy Colberg – Records Clerk 19 years, encouraging City Council and the Mayor to hire within.
- Detective Autumn Day started in 2014 as a dispatcher and joined the Rock Falls Police department in 2018. Several candidates are inside the department and candidates that have not left the Rock Falls Police Department and have years of service behind them. Morale has been down, and it gives the current force no value if hiring outside of department.
- Patrolman Matt McKanna, 10 ½ years, full consideration to all applicants needs to be done to have a fair process. The process of this selection has been done completely different than in the past, needs to follow a fair process and consideration.
- Deputy Chief Doug Wolber – 19 ½ years on the Rock Falls Police Department. As Deputy Chief he has an open-door policy and as of late has had to spend time to calm this issue down. Promotions would be taken away if hired from outside of department.
- Mitch Ottenhausen – Sergeant 13 years, has been ordered to work more shifts because of the short staffing issues. Would like to see the new chief hired from within.
- Sheriff John Booker – Whiteside County, this is a very tough task and the Sheriff's department is willing to help wherever needed. Gave a letter to Council members.
- Chief Dave Pilgrim – Retired today after 24 years on the Police force in Rock Falls. He is proud of the men and women that stood up tonight and spoke to the Council. The Mayor has the authority to appoint but the Council members have the final say.
- Rollie Elder – stated that if he is hired for the position that he would bring back the Police force into community with each other and be a team player.
- Mayor Kleckler stated that there are State Statutes and legal requirements that the Mayor has the responsibility of. He stated that he never said that there weren't any more qualified applicants.

- Alderwoman McKanna began to speak and the Mayor stated that since she was abstaining from any vote she could not voice her opinion.
- Alderman Wangelin – Illegal to use City property to persuade council members by copying 22 pages of documents
- Alderwoman Sobottka – Succession plans have been put into place for a reason for all department heads. Ordinance (OLPS) Committee is the Committee that is suppose to handle this type issue, protocol was not followed. It has caused distress in the department. Council members only received one resume.
- Mayor Kleckler asked for a motion to move into Executive Session
 - None were given
- Mayor Kleckler asked for a show of hands to confirm Rollie Elder as the next Police Chief – none were raised.

A motion was made by Alderwoman Sobottka and second by Alderman Doane to adjourn the meeting

Vote via voice – all approved, meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.

Pamela Martinez

Pamela Martinez, City Clerk