

Talent in the pipeline to lead Cheektowaga Police Department for decades

By **Jim Herr** - October 21, 2018



Captain Michael J. Sliwinski salutes during the 21st annual memorial service to remember fallen law enforcement officers at Hitchcock Park on Como Park Boulevard. August 31, 2018 (File Photo/Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

CHEEKTOWAGA – The recent retirement of Assistant Chief of Police Jim Speyer left a void in the department, but Chief of Police David Zack says years of planning and talent development is about to fall into place.

The Cheektowaga Town Council is expected to approve several police department promotions Tuesday evening.

“When a chief leaves, four people get promoted, which means twelve people get interviewed. We’ve been doing interviews for over a month deciding who’s next in line,” Mr. Zack tells Cheektowaga Chronicle. “A lot of moving parts, a lot of people moving into new positions, there’s going to be a reshuffling of assignments at the top level, so a lot is going on here right now.”

Assistant Chief of Police Speyer [retired on October 19th after 31-years with the Cheektowaga Police Department.](#)

Cheektowaga Chronicle has learned that Captain Michael J. Sliwinski is being tapped to replace Mr. Speyer as assistant chief of police. He has led the patrol division for the past several years supervising on average, four lieutenants, nine sergeants, 79 officers, and eleven crossing guards.

Captain Michael J. Sliwinski speaks with Lt. Anthony Filipki during a bank robbery manhunt in August 2017. (Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

"There's a lot going on on any given day, so you have to have experience in a wide variety of areas; Captian Sliwinski has that. Chief Speyer's leaving is certainly a big hole, but I'm confident that Captian Sliwinski can fill that void," said Mr. Zack.

Lieutenant Brian J. Gould who is currently the supervisor of the afternoon shift is being promoted to Captian. Patrol Sergeant Christopher Geelan is being promoted to Lieutenant, and Officer Garrett R. Slawatycki is being promoted to sergeant.

Chief Zack says each position is competitive and subject to Civil Service rules. Each candidate finished with a top score on their respective civil service list.

He says the department has invested years to craft a "well-thought-out plan" that focuses on recognizing and developing talent within the department.

"We have talent in the pipeline, and we're very confident that as people move forward and people move out that the replacements are there; my replacement is there. We do a really good job of identifying talent early, developing it, and then when the time comes, they seem to step-in seamlessly," said Mr. Zack. "We think we're among the leaders of Western New York law enforcement. Regardless of who's at the top that's going to continue. I think the Town of Cheektowaga is going to be in very good hands, not just for the years to come, but the decades to come."

Sergeant Christopher Geelan (2nd from right) pauses during a moment of silence during the town's 2017 September 11th service in Town Park. (Chronicle File Photo)

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