

7 people to be interviewed for SLT police chief

By Kathryn Reed

South Lake Tahoe expects to have a police chief on the force in October. Interviews for the seven candidates vying for the top cop job in the city are Sept. 13.



One of the seven is local, with the rest from outside the basin. Martin Hewlett, captain and acting chief of the department, is not the local candidate. He took over when Terry Daniels retired at the end of 2009.

“Hopefully, I will have the challenge of picking between a couple really good people,” City Manager Tony O’Rourke said.

Although the decision is ultimately O’Rourke’s, he is convening a slew of panels on that day to interview the people. Sworn and non-sworn officers, and department heads are a couple of the panels.

A citizens group has also been called. It is comprised of at least one person from the South Lake Tahoe Women’s Center (not Leanne Wagoner who is married to Officer Ryan Wagoner and daughter-in-law to Mayor Kathay Lovell), B Gorman from the Nevada-based chamber, David Kelly from the Tahoe Area Coordinating Council for the Disabled, a rep from the Latino community and perhaps others.

A peer review of people from the basin will ask candidates questions, too. Lt. Les Lovell of the El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department is not on the panel.

“I’m not going to these groups to see who they would hire. I want to know what they see as strengths and weaknesses in the

candidates," O'Rourke said. "I would hope after going through the gauntlet of interviews there would be some consistency, but there might be an aberration to look at."

He wants someone who has strong managerial and strong community skills.

O'Rourke plans to interview all the candidates before the panels do.

After the September interviews, the hope is two finalists will emerge. Further background checks on them will be done, with possible secondary interviews to follow.

O'Rourke wants to have a chief by early October.