

# South Lake Tahoe hires police chief from outside department

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By Kathryn Reed

The first police chief hired from outside the department was sworn in this morning at the South Lake Tahoe City Council meeting.

Brian Uhler becomes the eighth chief, taking over a department that has had a rocky time of it in recent years, especially under the leadership of former Chief Terry Daniels. Capt. Martin Hewlett has been the leader of the department since the start of the year after Daniels left.

Several members of the police department were on hand as Uhler was sworn-in and given his badge at the end of the Nov. 2 council meeting. He said a few perfunctory words before the meeting was adjourned.

Uhler, 49, most recently was a captain in the UC San Francisco police force. He was laid off in August after two years on the job. Before that he spent 25 years with the Corpus Christi, Texas, police department. He retired as a commander.

Uhler has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a master's degree in public administration, and is a graduate of the FBI Academy.



City Manager  
Tony O'Rourke,  
right, Nov. 2  
gives South  
Tahoe Police  
Chief Brian  
Uhler his  
shield.  
Photo/Kathryn  
Reed

"He really understands the whole police operations," City Manager Tony O'Rourke told *Lake Tahoe News*. "He is very smart and strategic. He doesn't come across as a typical cop."

This is O'Rourke's first hire since coming on board in August. His next appointment, which could be before the end of the year, will be director of Parks and Recreation.

In the series of panel interviews, Uhler was the top candidate for the chiefs of police. O'Rourke sent most of the several dozen resumes to a police chief he knows in Florida who ranked Uhler as the top candidate on paper.

Uhler was one of three finalists. No local candidates made the final list.

Uhler called the five panels in one day an "endurance event."

Uhler has experience in all aspects of a police department, which appealed to O'Rourke.

"A lot of chiefs come from administration or the political side. This guy has proven himself on the street," O'Rourke said.

Another key for O'Rourke was to hire someone who could mentor the younger officers. Liking the outdoors was another selling point. Uhler is a hiker, skier and cyclist.

“You have to share the values of why people are here. He shares those values and embraces them,” O’Rourke said.

On top of that, even though Uhler spent so many years in Texas, he is a Giants fan. He drove into town last night after the Giants were crowned World Champions after beating the Texas Rangers in Game 5 of the World Series.

Uhler has a little experience with snow. He spent some time in Mammoth – though it was as a youth. With his father in the aerospace industry, he moved around a bit as a kid. After high school he joined the Army, where he entered the military police. He went to the Corpus Christi department after being discharged.

Uhler is divorced with two children. His son is in college in North Carolina. His daughter will move to Tahoe this winter to attend Lake Tahoe Community College.

He will be making a base salary of \$142,000, with a 1.5 percent longevity incentive boosting his pay to about \$145,000 year.

Uhler’s first day on the job will be Nov. 8.