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Nashua's Morrissey to step down, Galipeau selected as new fire chief

By CHRIS GAROFOLO

Staff Writer

NASHUA – After nine years under the leadership of Chief Brian W. Morrissey, the city of Nashua will soon have a new head of its fire department.

Steven G. Galipeau, an assistant chief with Nashua Fire Rescue, was unanimously selected this week by the city's Board of Fire Commissioners to lead the department as a cap to his 35-year career as a firefighter. He will take over June 1 for the retiring Morrissey, who took the reins of the department in March 2007.

"It's really exciting. It's a place I grew up in, my father was a firefighter when I first started here and, being here for 35 years, you take a lot of pride and a lot of ownership in the department, the direction we're going, the challenges and now to get the chance to be the next chief, it's pretty awesome," Galipeau said.

"The chiefs before me have set a great foundation for this department and set a goal that we continue to strive for," he added.

Paul Garant, chairman of commissioners board, said Galipeau was an attractive choice given his longevity with the department and connection to Nashua.

"He came up as a private and worked his way through the ranks, and I think that's important because he understands the department, he understands the people and he understands the city," Garant said. "There was no discussion of looking for candidates outside, we have brought Steve through in his role as deputy chief and most recently in his role as assistant chief, to prepare him to do that."

Galipeau, a 55-year-old Nashua native and second generation firefighter – his father Wilfred served in the department from 1958 to 1983 – has been with the agency since March 1980. In 1996, he was promoted to lieutenant, captain four years later and deputy chief in 2007.

He was promoted to assistant chief in 2011. For his upcoming role, he touts the leadership, experience and the dedication he brings to continue to improve his department every day.

"If you're just going for the ride, you're not going to be a productive member of your organization. I've always strived to better myself – educationally, experience-wise and training," he said. "I've always looked to take that next step for the betterment of the department (and) help make Nashua Fire Rescue one of the best fire departments in the state."

Galipeau is a certified hazardous materials technician and member of the SMART Hazardous Materials Response team. He has earned an associate degree in fire science from New Hampshire Technical College in Laconia, a certificate in Homeland Security & Emergency/Disaster Management from Rivier College and a bachelor's degree in fire service administration from Granite State College.

Morrissey, who could not be reached for comment Tuesday, joined the Nashua department in 1978 and rose through the ranks over the next two decades. In 2000, he was promoted to deputy chief and assistant chief a year later.

He has held multiple positions, including president for six terms, of the local chapter of the International Association of Fire Fighters and as an officer in the Firemen's Relief Association and the New Hampshire State Permanent Firefighters Association.

"Personally, I've enjoyed the nine years (Morrissey) has given us. I've enjoyed working with him, he's extremely knowledgeable and he's probably the best budget man I've seen in a long time in terms of managing a budget," Garant said. "And I know Steve will do the same thing. I have a lot of faith in assistant chief Galipeau in taking the role as chief of the department."

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