

Willeford Group
Consulting

2012

City of Hermiston



Selecting the
Next
Chief of Police

Assessment,
Validation, and Study

5/9/2012

Willeford Group

May 9, 2012

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Mr. Brookshier:

This is the Final Report of the “Assessment and Validation Process” for the selection of the City of Hermiston Chief of Police completed by Willeford Group. The assessment, validation, and review process were conducted over a two-week period and covered examination of the candidate’s suitability for Chief of Police, factors contributing to the long-term success of the candidate, the needs of the Hermiston Police Department (HPD), the need for additional selection alternatives, and the forecasting of emerging issues likely to impact the City of Hermiston in the future. A security background examination was also completed on the candidate.

The primary goal of the process was to determine the long-term suitability of **Mr. Jason Edmiston** as Hermiston’s next Chief of Police and examine factors tied to his success in this new role, both short and long-term. In meeting this overarching goal, the organizational needs of HPD and its members, the goals and trends for the greater City of Hermiston, and key historical issues related to past police chiefs were all factored into our final recommendations.

Willeford Group encountered significant support in the assessment and validation process. Furthermore, support in the appointment of Mr. Edmiston as Chief of Police was unanimous. Not one individual stepped forward to oppose the appointment.

As the assessment was undertaken, I observed significant levels of enthusiasm and great work being undertaken within HPD. There is authentic excitement in the appointment of Edmiston as the next Chief of Police for the City of Hermiston. I wish to thank all the men and women of HPD and greater City of Hermiston that took the time to share with me their perspectives on what is most needed today and into the future for the next Chief of Police while also pointing to the future challenges and essential elements necessary for organizational success.

Sincerely,

Gregory M. Willeford, Owner
Willeford Group

Executive Summary

Section 1.0

Overview

In April 2012, a formal assessment and validation process was undertaken by the City of Hermiston, Oregon as a means to select the next Chief of Police.

Assessment, Validation, and Study Approach

The City of Hermiston engaged Willeford Group Consulting to perform an independent validation and assessment of the selection of Mr. Jason Edmiston as the next Chief of Police. The primary focus of the assessment, validation, and study was to determine the suitability of Mr. Edmiston to be the next Chief of Police for the City of Hermiston and to examine factors contributing to both short and long-term success.

The conclusions and findings resulting from the assessment, validation, and study process were not limited to the data obtained as a result of interviews using standards based questions. That information was collected, analyzed, and studied for sure. In making final recommendation, steps were also taken to examine and factor-in information regarding:

- Recent history of HPD
- Current issues impacting or likely to impact HPD and the City of Hermiston
- Emerging challenges and trends for the future

Additional areas of review and also study involved:

- Background of Mr. Jason Edmiston
- HPD Leadership
- HPD Organizational design and structure
- HPD Organizational history
- Organizational health of HPD
- Expressed organization and leadership needs of HPD members and key stakeholders
- Goal and program alignment between HPD and the City of Hermiston
- Attitudes and levels of support for Edmiston among HPD members, city officials, and key community stakeholders
- Emerging issues certain to influence HPD, HPD leadership, and the City of Hermiston for the next five years
- Strategic direction of HPD

The Principal of Willeford Group, Gregory Willeford designed and performed the assessment, validation, and study process. Willeford initiated an aggressive one-week interview driven approach supplemented by study and review of interview data, document review, and limited observation of HPD operations. Willeford interviewed 38 individuals representing HPD, City of Hermiston officials, community stakeholders, and the candidate (two interview sessions). The interview process resulted in 60% of HPD employees being interviewed.

The assessment, validation, and review process were conducted over a two-week period and covered examination of the candidate's suitability for Chief of Police, factors contributing to the long-term success of the candidate, the needs of the Hermiston Police Department (HPD), the need for additional selection alternatives, and the forecasting of emerging issues likely to impact the City of Hermiston in the future.

A security background examination was also completed on the candidate.

Consistent themes related to needed leadership style, management trends, candidate strengths and support, and urgent needs and challenges facing HPD were identified early on during the study and remained consistent throughout.

Key Recommendations

Significant support for the assessment and validation process was encountered during this process. Furthermore, support in the appointment of Mr. Edmiston as Chief of Police was *unanimous*. Not one individual stepped forward to oppose the appointment during a very public and open process.

Based upon the assessment, validation, and study process, Willeford Group Consulting *without hesitation* recommends the appointment of Mr. Jason Edmiston as the next Chief of Police for the City of Hermiston, Oregon.

An additional search for a more appropriate or different candidate is not recommended. It is the opinion of

Key Recommendations

Selection Process

- ✓ *Validated* – Direct appointment most appropriate
- ✓ National or local search process not necessary or *beneficial* in this case

Candidate Selection

- ✓ Candidate's background, security examination, integrity, loyalty, personality, education, professional and community credentials, law enforcement experience, leadership style, vision, and work ethic make him an outstanding candidate for Hermiston Chief of Police
- ✓ Current timing, organization issues, and expressed needs of HPD employees and City of Hermiston create compelling justification to Appoint Mr. Jason Edmiston as Hermiston Chief of Police

Professional Development

- ✓ Edmiston's youth, leadership history with HPD, limited experience level, and "professional will" make for a strong candidate for Chief of Police

Willeford Group that Mr. Jason Edmiston is the *best* and *most appropriate* candidate for Chief of Police due to the following factors and variables:

1. Recent history of HPD involving the departure of the Dan Coulombe as police chief
2. The enormous internal and community support Mr. Edmiston enjoys
3. The leadership style and vision of the future for HPD held by Mr. Edmiston
4. Mr. Edmiston's long standing history, knowledge *and understanding* of both the community of Hermiston and the HPD (both favorable unfavorable historical issues)
5. An expressed urgency by HPD members to keep moving forward within HPD the implementation of contemporary public safety strategies that afford the entire department to innovate and do outstanding work for the public
6. HPD has a talented, motivated and willing workforce under the leadership and direction of a visionary and authentic acting police chief
7. Edmiston has exceptional interpersonal skills tempered with clear lines of accountability and expectation – a rare combination of skills and a significant variable in development of a healthy, successful, and effective police organization
8. As Chief of Police, Edmiston is the most likely individual to successfully lead HPD through the challenges most impacting the HPD and City of Hermiston today and into the future

A more detailed account of the assessment and validation process and key findings follows this Executive Summary.

Section 2.0

Introduction

This is the Final Report of the “Assessment and Validation Process” for the selection of the City of Hermiston Chief of Police completed by Willeford Group. The assessment, validation, and review process were conducted over a two-week period and covered examination of the candidate’s suitability for Chief of Police, factors contributing to the long-term success of the candidate, the needs of the Hermiston Police Department (HPD), the need for additional selection alternatives, and the forecasting of emerging issues likely to impact the City of Hermiston in the future. A security background examination was also completed on the candidate.

The primary goal of the process was to determine the long-term suitability of Mr. **Jason Edmiston** as Hermiston’s next Chief of Police and examine factors tied to his success in this new role, both short and long-term. In meeting this overarching goal, the organizational needs of HPD and its members, the goals and trends for the greater City of Hermiston, and key historical issues related to past police chiefs were all factored into the final recommendations.

Section 3.0

Organizational Overview

The HPD provide 24/7 public safety services for the City of Hermiston, Oregon. Located in Northeast Oregon within Umatilla County, HPD serves over 16,000 residents. The City of Hermiston is the largest city in Eastern Oregon.

The HPD has approximately 35 funded positions, eight reserve officers and is organized to provide the primary services of Administration, Police Operations, Crime Prevention, Chaplaincy Programs, Criminal Investigations (person, property, and gang intervention), School Resources, Code Enforcement, and Emergency Telecommunications.

The HPD provides crime control, emergency response, and peace and order services to over 4,500 culturally diverse households, 3,300 families, numerous businesses and visitors. The cultural and business diversity is expected to markedly increase within the next decade.

The HPD is one of 13 departments comprising city governance.

The purpose of HPD is to provide police and emergency response services to support a peaceful, safe, and thriving community both socially and economically.

HPD officers are trained and commissioned by the State of Oregon.

Section 4.0

Methodology of Assessment

The primary focus of the assessment, validation, and study process is to determine the suitability of Mr. Edmiston to be the next Chief of Police for the City of Hermiston and to examine factors contributing to both short and long-term success. Additional areas of review and study involved:

- Background of Mr. Jason Edmiston
- HPD Leadership
- HPD Organizational design and structure
- HPD Organizational history
- Organizational health of HPD
- Expressed organization and leadership needs of HPD members and key stakeholders
- Goal and program alignment between HPD and the City of Hermiston
- Attitudes and levels of support for Edmiston among HPD members, city officials, and key community stakeholders
- Emerging issues certain to influence HPD, HPD leadership, and the City of Hermiston for the next five years
- Strategic direction of HPD

The primary means of conducting the assessment and validation process involved interviews with members of HPD, City of Hermiston officials, and key community stakeholders. This process was supplemented by study and review of interview data, document review, and limited observation of HPD operations.

On April 8, 2012 an initial email invitation was sent out to all members of the HPD, City of Hermiston officials, and key stakeholders to participate in the interview phase. The interviews were voluntary and the consultant offered to meet at any location at any time of day or night during the week of April 16- 22nd, 2012 to fulfill this phase.

On April 13, 2012, a second email invitation was sent out to all members of HPD and key stakeholders again inviting them to interviews. This was completed as an added step to ensure all interested persons had notice and the opportunity to participate in this phase of the assessment process.

The work of the consultant was also featured in the local newspaper before and during the week of interviews. Additionally, the consultant appeared before the Hermiston City Council Public Safety Committee to brief that body on the commencement of the assessment and validation process and to take questions from members of the City Council and all persons present on that date (Tuesday, April 17, 2012).

A total of 38 individuals representing HPD, City of Hermiston officials, community stakeholders, and the candidate were interviewed. A formal Interview Guide with a slate of core standards-based questions was developed for the interviews. The standard-based questions were directed at collecting information related to the focus of this review as bulleted above.

Overall, the assessment, validation, and study process were conducted over a two-week period and covered examination of the candidate's suitability for Chief of Police, factors contributing to the long-term success of the candidate, the needs of the HPD, the need for additional selection alternatives, and the forecasting of emerging issues likely to impact the City of Hermiston in the future. A security background examination was also completed on the candidate to include standard record checks.

Consistent themes related to needed leadership style, management trends, candidate strengths and support, and urgent needs and challenges facing HPD were identified early on during the study and remained consistent throughout.

Section 5.0

Key Findings

Question:

Should the City of Hermiston extend or expand the recruitment for selecting the next Chief of Police?

Finding:

No. There are no perceived benefits in extending or expanding the recruitment and selection process for the next Hermiston Chief of Police. The most appropriate candidate is currently within the HPD serving as Acting Chief of Police.

Rationale:

The methods used in the assessment and validation process resulted in a deep and more complete examination of the candidate than normally would be the case in traditional human resource recruitments. The interview process was very complete and probing into the candidate's background, capabilities, character, personal integrity, and level of support. The interviews also focused on topics most germane for success in this type of appointment.

The end result of this process is Edmiston is believed to be the best and most appropriate candidate for Chief of Police for three primary reasons:

1. **Timing** – The current timing for appointing a qualified “internal” candidate as Chief of Police could not be more appropriate. Due to a variety of organizational circumstances

(many associated with the previous chief), the members of HPD are ready for a qualified internal candidate that understands their history, organizational culture, the community, and most importantly, them. An outside candidate, regardless of how qualified they may be through education and experience, will not satisfy these interests nor be able to quickly move this organization forward to a higher level of stable performance.

Sixty-percent of HPD membership was interviewed in this phase. *All expressed support* in the appointment of Jason Edmiston as the next Chief of Police. Furthermore, when asked, all but one felt that 100% of HPD employees believe Edmiston *can* successfully and effectively perform the duties of Chief of Police.

- 2. Environmental Factors** – Both the City of Hermiston and HPD are strategically poised to appoint a qualified internal candidate as Chief of Police. The support is very high for this particular candidate. Of all interviews conducted, not one person opposed the appointment of Mr. Edmiston as Chief of Police. All of them believe he has the capacity and ability to be successful and effective as the next chief.

Among those persons internal to HPD, nearly every person interviewed cited having a chief possessing a long-standing history and knowledge of the community and of the internal workings of HPD is what is most needed today and into the future.

The City of Hermiston has been experiencing growth and economic development. Hermiston will continue to experience growth, enhanced cultural diversity, and economic expansion. These environmental issues argue to “get moving” on appointing a well qualified and knowledgeable Chief of Police. Mr. Edmiston is a perfect fit due to the current and projected environmental factors facing the City of Hermiston and HPD.

- 3. Unique Qualifications of Candidate** – Candidate Jason Edmiston is 37 years old, a native resident of Hermiston, and has been serving the community through HPD since he was age 22. He is rooted within the community by marriage and children. Within HPD, Edmiston has served as the Operations Lieutenant under the previous chief for several years. He has been Acting Chief of Police for at least seven months and, from everyone’s account, doing a successful and effective job.

This candidate is young and could conceivably be the Chief of Police for the City of Hermiston for the next 15 years or longer.

The factors cited above are very unique. They should be viewed as strengths for both the candidate and organization. If appointed to Chief of Police, Edmiston will have adequate

time to bring the HPD from “good” to “GREAT”¹. One of the limiting factors preventing high levels of positive organization development within police organizations is the fact most chiefs hold their positions for short periods of time. Most are not appointed until they are nearly ready for retirement.

In this case, Edmiston has ample time and will be able to think about and prepare the organization beyond his tenure and develop meaningful succession plans. He will have the time to sustain real change within the organization that makes the HPD organization GREAT and valuable to the public.

If done correctly, Edmiston will have adequate time to create the right systems for overcoming obstacles and developing a strong, self-disciplined culture within HPD that will result in self-motivated and self-managed professionals. This system and culture will continue long after Edmiston retires or is otherwise replaced years from now.

One of the most obvious traits of Mr. Edmiston is he is “humble” yet firm. He is described as exceptionally visionary. The non-egocentric trait of personal humbleness is so rare within appointed chiefs of police. Due to police culture and standard appointment processes for chiefs of police, many candidates are driven by authority, power, and a good bit of ego. This is not the type of leader most effective for the 21st century police organization. As Jim Collins author of *Good to Great* has determined through exhaustive research, the most effective leaders do not exhibit enormous egos. The type of leadership required for turning a good organization into a great one is a style of humility, self-effacing reflection, and quite calm. In other words: a blend of personal humility and professional will. Mr. Edmiston appears to embody these attributes to his core.

The HPD also is well poised for higher levels of professionalism and development, primarily due to the work of the previous Chief of Police, Dan Coulombe. The interviews revealed positive support for many of the changes brought to HPD by Chief Coulombe. Respondents believe Coulombe was successful in management however,



MANAGEMENT TRINITY

There are three skills essential to successful and effective management:

- Technical
- Interpersonal
- Strategic

Of these, “interpersonal” skill is the most important regardless of the level of leadership position.



¹ See: Police Executive Research Forum, U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. *“Good to Great” in Policing Application of Business Management Principles in the Public Sector.* (2007). This work applies the leadership business principles of John Collins, *Good to Great* framework to policing and other public sector organizations. This research based framework is excellent and a “must read” for the contemporary police leader – GMW.

very ineffective in leadership due to the way he treated people. In essence, they believe Coulombe had inadequate interpersonal skills to be effective with others. Interpersonal skills are one of three primary and required management skills to be effective in any leadership position. A common attribute repeatedly described by people interviewed, cited Edmiston as having exceptional interpersonal skills.

Additionally, the time Edmiston worked directly under Chief Coulombe, he learned what worked well and more importantly, he learned firsthand what did not work in the areas of effective management and leadership practice. This provides a significant strategic advantage to Edmiston over any other candidate.

Question:

Does the candidate, Mr. Jason Edmiston, meet minimum qualifications by education and experience to assume the position and responsibilities of the next Chief of Police for the City of Hermiston?

Finding:

Yes. This finding is rendered by Willeford Group without reservation based upon review of the candidate and the discussion cited above.

Rationale:

As cited previously, Mr. Edmiston's youth and, even to a degree, his limited leadership experience can be a significant strength for the city. His knowledge of Hermiston and the HPD under different leadership models is a strength. Edmiston will require (as all leaders do) continued professional development, training, study, and education. With proper professional development, mentoring, education, training, and actual leadership experience, Edmiston is expected to be both successful and highly effective as the next Chief of Police.

Based upon the extensive review and examination of Edmiston, he is expected to be successful (meaning a good manager that achieves measurable results and outcomes) and effective (meaning he has the leadership qualities and traits to motivate, inspire, and create an atmosphere of self-management and accountability among his employees to achieve results and outcomes). According to persons interviewed during this assessment and validation process, this type of leadership is sorely needed within HPD and is expected to produce very positive organizational results. These results will be visible to the greater community and city government.

Question:

Does candidate Edmiston possess the appropriate background, character, and integrity to be the Chief of Police?

Finding:

Yes.

Rationale:

As part of the assessment, validation, and study process, Mr. Edmiston was subjected to significant scrutiny and examination. A total of 38 persons were interviewed and asked questions pertaining to the candidate's background, integrity, and personal life. Standard investigatory records checks were also made against the candidate.

The security investigation did not reveal any concerns regarding the candidate's character, background, or integrity. In fact, the Mr. Edmiston is an *exceptional* candidate for the position of Chief of Police for the City of Hermiston.

Question:

Did the assessment and validation process reveal any internal or external concern or issues that may contribute to the failure of this candidate as Chief of Police?

Finding:

No. None.

Rationale:

This issue was examined as part of the assessment and validation process. Persons were asked about any factors either internally or externally that could prevent or block the success of this candidate in the role of Chief of Police. No issues within the control of the City of Hermiston or candidate were identified or discovered.

Question:

What is the current organizational health of the Hermiston Police Department as of spring 2012?

Finding:

The HPD is stable, reasonably healthy, and in a process of "re-calibrating" itself from the departure of the latest Chief of Police. It is now time to go from "good" to "GREAT".

Rationale:

From 2001 – 2011 the HPD underwent significant organization development in the areas of professionalism, personal and organizational accountability, performance management, and implementation of 21st century community policing strategies. The experiences and lessons

learned during the past decade with Chief Coulombe are good and also can be a source of organizational strength. This history strategically positions HPD and Mr. Edmiston in an extraordinary position to take the organization to the next level of performance. The initial “next level” of performance may be as simple as initiatives that allow things to settle in and stabilize and that allow the rank and file to take stock and catch their breath. During this phase, healing, planning, and great police work can still occur every day. The new chief will ultimately have to decide what strategies are best and the correct timing of them.

As previously mentioned, many of the changes initiated by Chief Coulombe are viewed by current members of the HPD as being positive and necessary. It is now time for HPD to take the good things that this decade of change brought and take them to the next level of performance at the right time.

The current manner in which HPD is strategically positioned with a highly qualified internal candidate for Chief of Police, places the organization at the brink of doing GREAT things. As one respondent to the interviews said, HPD “is on the cusp of something incredible.” We agree. (Refer to attached HPD Logic Model and the short, medium, and long-term outcomes as examples of what this greatness will look like).

Question:

What can the candidate do to enhance his leadership and effectiveness as Chief of Police if appointed?

Finding:

Several things.

Rationale:

If the City of Hermiston appoints Jason Edmiston as the next Chief of Police, the following is recommended for serious consideration to provide the new chief with long-term success and professional development:

1. City Manager develops specific, clear, and measurable performance expectations for the new chief each year with annual performance being formally documented in a performance review. In the case of Jason Edmiston, one expectation consistently expressed by his employees during the interview phase was: don’t change - continue the current leadership and communication style while holding all personnel accountable for results. Or as one person said, “be open and personable as he is so good at, and have a backbone of steel (firm accountability) yet, only use it when you need to.” This person strongly felt Edmiston possesses these attributes and skills.

Allow the chief to make independent decisions and hold him strictly accountable for

organizational harmony, development, and internal control in all areas.

2. Develop a formal schedule for one-on-one feedback discussions between the City Manager and Chief for the purpose of mutual discussion of performance, operational issues, successes, needs, and other matters (on a monthly and as needed basis – this must be an ongoing priority).
3. Consider one-on-one leadership training and development for the chief. This type of individual development can quickly grow additional leadership capacity and skill in both the “hard” and “soft” skill areas. One-on-one leadership coaching is much different than mentoring. Leadership coaching is prescriptive and focused work. It is directed at producing measurable change and modification in leadership-management behavior. This work does produce documented return-on-investment (ROI).
4. Consider ongoing mentoring to provide a listening ear, independent wisdom, and thoughtful ideas.
5. Develop an intentional practice of personal wellness that fosters work-life balance and wholeness to the areas of mind – body – spirit – heart. Unfortunately, the data on police suicide, mental illness, divorce, poor health, bad health habits, and substance abuse is well document nationally. To be most effective long-term, a person MUST be mindful and intentional about practicing wellness. A healthy chief is a successful and effective chief. Development of personal wellness strategies and plans can also be included in one-on-one leadership coaching work.
6. Require the new chief to continue to develop and learn best practice in management and leadership through self-study and learning. Require regular reading, discussion and analysis of management case study and leadership materials. A culture of a learning organization will end up being created.
7. The new chief should become involved in the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Association of Oregon Chiefs of Police (AOCP), local Chamber of Commerce and other civic organizations. This involvement will provide excellent access and involvement with other leaders on a variety of topics and issues. Attend annual conferences and learn! In four – eight years, become involved in various IACP/AOCP committees.

8. Consider sending the chief to Harvard Kennedy School of Governments three-week intensive leadership training within five years of appointment.
9. In about five years, and if the organization is stable with effective leadership/management, the Chief of Police should be provided with an opportunity to seek higher academic learning through graduate level study. This can be accomplished with little impact to the organization. The areas of recommended study are Business Administration and/or Public Administration at the graduate level. The study should result in award of a Masters Degree through a reputable university of study. Much of the study and work from this type of course work will apply to the CEO level work of a police chief and will make them even more successful and effective. This study is estimated to encompass two-three years to complete at a proper disciplined pace. As a note: all professional development should be formally planned and coordinated so training hours can apply toward the graduate degree later on. This will save time and funding.
10. Expect the new chief to set clear measurable expectations for performance and professional accountability within the HPD among all members.

Question:

Are the goals of the HPD in alignment with the City of Hermiston?

Finding:

Yes.

Rationale:

During the assessment and validation process, an examination of the City of Hermiston's priorities was made. This information was compared to the current work, operations, and goals of the HPD. From all observation and statements made by those interviewed, the work of HPD is in alignment and supports the priorities of the city.

This concludes the section on Key Findings.

Section 6.0

Conclusion

As the assessment was undertaken, I observed significant levels of enthusiasm and great work being undertaken within HPD. There is authentic excitement in the appointment of Jason Edmiston as the next Chief of Police for the City of Hermiston.

As a professional consultant focusing my practice on organization and individual leadership development, it has been an extreme pleasure to work with the City of Hermiston on this process. The positive notations made in this report are not overstated. The HPD has a pool of talented employees that are poised to develop the organization to higher levels of excellence. The gifts, talents, vision, and leadership style of Mr. Jason Edmiston is *very unique* in the police executive field. Mr. Edmiston has the characteristics, traits, character, integrity, personality, and professional vision to lead HPD into the future. He also has the necessary skills to continue healing wounds and re-stabilizing the HPD from the past change in executive leadership.

Again, it is without hesitation, that Willeford Group Consulting recommends Mr. Jason Edmiston as the next Chief of Police for the City of Hermiston. We place our seal of professional approval upon this finding. With the health and organizational wellness of HPD in mind, this appointment should occur immediately.

In closing, I wish to thank all of the men and women of HPD and the greater City of Hermiston that took the time to share with me their perspectives on what is most needed today and into the future for the next Chief of Police while also pointing to the future challenges and essential elements necessary for organizational success.

Thank you for the opportunity to collaborate with the City of Hermiston on the assessment, validation, and study of the candidate for Chief of Police. It has been an honor and pleasure to work with you!

END

City of Hermiston: Police Department - Program Logic Model Spring 2012

Hermiston Police Department (HPD) is the sole-source provider of public safety services for the City of Hermiston, Oregon. Located in Northeast Oregon within Umatilla County, HPD serves over 16,000 residents. The HPD provides crime control, emergency response, and peace and order services to over 4,500 households, 3,300 families, and numerous businesses and visitors. The HPD is one of 13 departments comprising city governance. The purpose of the HPD is to provide police and emergency response services to support a peaceful and safe community.

