



The Times

Retired Newark chief gets job in Trenton

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BY KEVIN SHEA

TRENTON -- A retired Newark police chief has been hired as the city's communications director and will start next week, Police Director Joseph Santiago confirmed yesterday.

Irving Bradley, appointed as Newark's police chief in 2004 by former Newark Mayor Sharpe James, retired last summer on the eve of Mayor Cory Booker's administration assuming the reins of the state's largest city. He served for 20 years in the Newark department was the city's first African-American police chief.

Bradley will start as Trenton's communications director sometime after Labor Day, Santiago said. The director said he wasn't planning a formal announcement.

Santiago said Bradley will be making changes in the communications division, which the city put back under the police department's umbrella in June after about a decade of reporting to the city's administration division.

The communications division is known to police and firefighters by its main physical location, the "radio room," which is basically the police and fire dispatch center in police headquarters on North Clinton Avenue.

The division, however, has grown in the past decade to handle all city communications, from dispatching sanitation trucks to answering 911 calls.

Santiago reiterated yesterday what city officials said in June, that the police department is the natural home for the division since the radio room's workload is 85 percent police related.

Bradley also will be responsible for other changes, including getting a new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) and records management systems up and running which the city has already budgeted.

Santiago said he also wants Bradley to develop the division into a local "fusion center," incorporating the city's surveillance cameras and other technology into one mission.

"I think he'll be a good fit for it," Santiago said.

Bradley's 20 years as a Newark police officer came with accolades, but also with one very public low point - a May 1998 drunken driving arrest in Rahway during which he punched a police officer.

Bradley was a sergeant at the time and assigned to the police's professional standards unit.

In February of 1999, Bradley appeared in state Superior Court in Union County and pleaded guilty to resisting arrest, a fourth-degree felony, and the motor-vehicle violations of driving while intoxicated, reckless driving and refusal to take a Breathalyzer test.

Officers had found Bradley, who lives in Rahway, drunk behind the wheel of his car and tried to question him, but he drove off and led police on a chase to his own residence. In court, Bradley admitted he struck an officer when they caught up to him in front of his home.

Bradley was sentenced to 36 months probation, court records show, and kept his job because he was off duty and the incident did not touch on his official duties.

Bradley also faced police department punishment and Santiago, who was police director in Newark at the time, said yesterday he recalls suspending Bradley for three or six months for the incident.

Santiago said he believes Bradley has not had a drink since 1998, and that Trenton officials are aware of the incident. The felony conviction did not factor into Bradley's new post in Trenton, Santiago said.

"It was like 10 years ago," Santiago said.

In April 2004, Bradley was named acting police chief with a \$120,000 salary and discussed the conviction.

"It did not compromise my integrity," he told The Star-Ledger newspaper. "I learned from my mistakes and paid my debt."

Bradley was sworn in as Newark's police chief in August 2004. When he retired last summer he started collecting a \$70,600 annual pension -- based on a final-year average salary of \$141,300, state records show.

Exact details of Bradley's Trenton salary could not be learned yesterday.

The city's last permanent communications director was Daniel Campbell, who made \$89,500 annually. He was only with the city for 19 months when he left in January 2006. Steven Ponella was named acting communications director at the time and remains in the role.

Ponella, who has been acting director of the city's Health and Human Services Department and an assistant public works director in the past, will remain in the communications division for a while to make a seamless transition, Santiago said.

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