

YRP Deputy Carrique takes helm of OPP



By Brock Weir

York Regional Police Deputy Chief Tom Carrique has been named the new Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police.

Carrique's appointment to the OPP's top job was announced Monday by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Monday's announcement came after several weeks of controversy surrounding the leadership of the OPP, following the Provincial Government's appointment of Ron Taverner to the job at the end of last year. Due to Taverner's relationship with Premier Doug Ford and his family, his appointment was met with immediate criticism, culminating Thursday with Taverner withdrawing his name from contention.

Neither Carrique nor Sylvia Jones, Minister of Community Safety & Correctional Services, would elaborate on just when Carrique was first approached for the job, going only as far as saying talks took place last week.

"I did not see my future of policing anywhere but here at York Regional Police," said Carrique on Monday morning, speaking alongside Minister Jones at a press conference held at the YRP's Aurora headquarters.

Carrique told reporters he was "extremely grateful and deeply honoured" by the confidence placed in him by both the Ministry and the Provincial government.

His voice cracking with emotion, Carrique underscored his long-time service to the YRP.

"York Regional Police has been my home, my passion and my

family for 29 years. I have learned a great deal from some of the top police leaders that have served in this organization and the extremely dedicated, sworn and civilian staff. It is one of the finest police services in this country. I hope to benefit from my experience here in my new role.?

Accepting the job, he said, was ?one of the most difficult decisions I have ever made ? a decision that was made by a compelling and deep feeling of dedication to duty and the need to serve.?

?I am going to be extremely proud to be joining one of the finest police services in North America and to be given the opportunity to work alongside the frontline members of the OPP, the leadership, the Ontario Provincial Police association, to build on a proud policing history of more than a century and the great work that is done each and every day by the men and women of the Ontario Provincial Police,? he continued.

?These dedicated officers and support staff attend over 780,000 calls for service every year and they have received close to 97 per cent approval rating, saying that Ontarians feel very safe, and safe in our province. All of that, with achieving a 92 per cent clearance rate for the investigation of violent crime. This only happens with great people and a great organization.?

Looking ahead to taking on the role of OPP commissioner, Carrique said he will work hard ?each and every day? to earn the ?trust and confidence? of his new force, but, in doing so, his priorities will remain as they were during his time at the YRP.

?To me, leadership is about responsibility and there is no greater responsibility than that of a police leader because we are charged with the responsibility of the safety and wellbeing of the officers who put their lives on the line each and every day to serve and safeguard our communities. Only once we have been able to ensure that our officers are safe can they ensure that our citizens are safe and secure. Finally, a responsibility to ensure that we all safeguard the reputation of our organization and the profession of policing in general.

?Operationally, I will focus on working collaboratively with members of the Ontario Provincial Police and our many policing partners across this province and across this country to focus on combatting guns and gangs, the illicit trafficking of illegal drugs in this country, and to ensure that we are doing everything within our power to rescue the victims of human trafficking and bring those to justice who exploit them. I will remain focused on traffic safety. That is a priority for the Ontario Provincial Police and a priority I think every police officer needs to be committed to as a core function of policing responsibilities.?

Carrique will assume his role as OPP Commissioner on April 8, serving a three-year term.

In announcing his appointment, Minister Jones said the Province was "very excited" about bringing him on board.

"Deputy Chief Carrique will help bring outside vision to the OPP and work with talented officers and civilian staff to bring forward positive change," said Jones in a statement. "Deputy Chief Carrique's extensive experience is important as the OPP works to tackle challenging files, such as human trafficking and the ongoing fight against guns and gangs."

She reiterated this position at Monday's press conference, noting the importance of the "outside vision" he brings to the table.

"I actually think the OPP's role is very collaborative in terms of working with other police services, so having someone who has had 29 years experience working outside will understand the need for cooperation, particularly on the human trafficking and guns and gangs initiatives," she said. "Those have to be done in a collaborative way. To have someone with a different view, working in a different service, will be a big asset."

"I want to move forward," she added, when asked if this view was alluding to the controversies around the previous appointment. "I want to move forward with a new Commissioner, an individual who has a vision for how policing is changing across Canada and in Ontario, and I am very pleased with the choice."

Added Carrique: "Today is about moving forward " moving forward for the Ontario Provincial Police, who continue to serve with dedication and skill in this province."