

Michigan man chosen as Winter Park fire chief

WINTER PARK — Duane Mehl, a former fire chief in Traverse City, Mich., was appointed as the city's new fire chief at a city commission meeting Tuesday.

Mehl, 52, will begin work Feb. 16 and will earn \$35,000 a year. City Manager David Harden said Mehl was one of three finalists for the job. The others were Larry Grainger, Winter Park's assistant fire chief, and James Page, Apopka's assistant fire chief.

Harden said Mehl's experience was the main reason he was picked to head the 44-person department. Fire Chief Mike Molthop resigned in June and Police Chief Ray Beary has been acting fire chief since then.

"The fact that he [Mehl] has already served as a fire chief for a number of years, his interest in innovation and his overall length of experience were the main factors. I think he brings an overall level of experience and maturity that was well above the other two finalists," said Harden.

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