

State and Local

Bland gets appointment, replaces Jenkins as fire department chief

By Richard Williams
Senior Staff Writer

James Bland was appointed as the new chief of the Bryan Fire Department Wednesday.

Bland, who had been second in command, was appointed to the position by City Manager Ernest Clark, but the appointment will not be final until approved by the City Council.

Bland, a 20-year department veteran, replaces Claude Jenkins III, who resigned effective Feb. 12.

Jenkins had been placed on disciplinary probation in December after all 79 department firefighters signed a petition in October stating they had no confidence in Jenkins' ability to manage the department.

Bland said the past is one problem that should remain behind the department.

"We've got some wounds that

we've got to heal, and I believe time will heal them," Bland said. "The main thing I've been preaching was that the past is the past and there's nothing we can do to change it. All we can do is work toward the future and that's where our hope is."

After signing the petition, firefighters had said department morale was at an all time low, but Bland said that has changed.

"The moral is very high," he said. "Everybody in the department is very happy a person was appointed from within the department."

Clark said the city did not accept applications from individuals not currently working with the department.

"We made a decision early on that if there was somebody in the department that we could appoint chief it would be better for the department," Clark said.

Bland said the appointment of someone from within the department was a move in the right direction.

"I feel we have taken a tremendous step in healing the past and working toward the future," he said.

The department has everything it needs to improve, Bland said.

"We have a bunch of very talented and intelligent people working for the fire department and these people want to move forward," he said. "They want to improve the department and they want to make it the best it can possibly be. I think with this attitude and with the proper leadership . . . and the resources provided by the city we can accomplish that."

Clark said he will be working more closely with the department than he had in the past to help develop a standardized training pro-

gram and to review the policy and procedures manual of the department.

The petition signed by the firefighters complained about Jenkins' use of department policy and the lack of a "viable training program."

Clark said he understands "where they came from and the problems they thought they had."

"We tried to correct it," he said.

Nine applications were submitted for the position, but one applicant withdrew before the selection was made.

During his 20 years with the department Bland has been operation/training chief, deputy chief in charge of a shift, a lieutenant in charge of an engine company, an apparatus operator and a driver.

Police frustrated by rise in attacks against officers

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A series of bloody attacks on law officers statewide since the first of the year has fostered increased frustration among police and the criminal justice system.

Three Dallas officers were killed over a six-week period in January and February, while 21 other officers were injured in assaults.

San Antonio officials, meanwhile, were shocked as six officers were wounded by gunfire during a 10-week period from December to February.

"It's a risky job. But nobody signs on for stuff like this," San Antonio police Lt. Rudy Vernon says. "There's no question people are getting more violent against cops. Maybe with the badge and gun, they should issue a bullseye to wear."

Police officials, unions, criminologists and patrol officers are confused by the rising violence and are trying to pinpoint the causes.

Overcrowded prisons, lax paroles, a failing economy, rising crime rates, increased drug trafficking and a general decline in the country's moral fiber all are cited as causes.

Michael McMains, a San Antonio Police Department psychologist, says the increased violence is having a definite impact on officer morale.

"There's a lot of anger and fear," he says. "Recently, I've heard many more officers say they will be much more careful and a lot more suspicious on the street."

Doug Moore, a former officer now teaching criminal justice at Sam Houston State, says being a police officer today is much more difficult than it used to be.

"A lot of young officers are

dropping out, not because of the boredom or even because of the danger, but from the realization that the people out there hate them," he says.

Law enforcement officers, like Sgt. Harold Flammia, head of the San Antonio Police Officers Association, blame the increased attacks on a lax criminal justice system that imposes light sentences and paroles prisoners too soon.

"Right now there is no prison system," Flammia says. "The appeals court and the parole board are sending them back into the streets as quickly as we can get them in. The criminals know nothing will happen with them when we arrest them. We're losing the war."

From 1980 to 1985, assaults against law officers in Texas rose 14.4 percent, according to Department of Public Safety figures. In 1986, 4,380 Texas law officers were violently assaulted, a 21.1 percent increase over 1985.

In the United States, assaults on law officers rose 30 percent from 1976 to 1986, but fatalities dropped 29 percent during that time, according to the FBI.

But in 1987 there were 69 police fatalities, the first national jump in eight years.

Carole Eberhart, of the chief's office at the Dallas Police Department, says the situation places a tough burden on police officers.

"They grieve for their fellow policemen who died," she says. "Then they go right back to work out on the streets."

But Raymond Teske, of Sam Houston State University's criminal justice school, says the 36 percent increase in assaults on officers is roughly equal to the 33 percent increase in the number of law officers in Texas from 1976 to 1986.

Bush, Dukakis remain on top of pack as counting of delegates continues

(AP) — Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis remains the leader of the Democratic presidential pack as the dust settles on more delegate-counting in Kansas, Texas and South Dakota.

Meanwhile, Puerto Rico was holding Republican and Democratic presidential primaries Sunday, with Vice President George Bush poised to sweep the winner-take-all GOP contest.

The Democratic race in Puerto Rico hinged far more on local issues than on the candidates.

The U.S. commonwealth sends 14 delegates to the Republican National Convention and 53 delegates to the Democratic National Convention. The Democratic delegation is expected to go uncommitted and vote as a bloc.

Bob Dole, fighting for the survival of his Republican presidential bid, was in Wisconsin campaigning for the state's April 5 primary. The Kansas senator, who has suffered a series of crushing losses to Bush, has pledged to keep his faltering campaign alive at least until that contest.

Dole made a visit to a veterans hospital in Milwaukee on Sunday.

A poll published in the *Milwaukee Journal* suggested Bush held a commanding lead in Wisconsin. The survey of likely Republican voters, with a 6-point margin of error, said 69 percent backed Bush while 25 percent supported Dole. Pat Robertson trailed with 6 percent.

On the Democratic side, Dukakis led in Wisconsin with 38 percent, with Jackson at 30 percent, the *Journal* survey indicated. The other

three Democrats were closely clustered: Rep. Richard Gephardt, 11 percent; Sen. Paul Simon, 11 percent and Tennessee Sen. Albert Gore Jr., 10 percent. The Democratic survey had a margin of error of 5 percentage points.

Dukakis, at a Boston breakfast Sunday, was upbeat after his victory a day earlier in the Kansas Democratic caucuses, joking that he was just a simple farm boy — from Brooklyn.

Although he was edged out by Gephardt in delegates counted Saturday in South Dakota and by Jackson in Texas delegates counted the same day, Dukakis remained ahead in national delegates.

The South Dakota totals were in line with last month's primary, which

Gephardt won. Texas had already allocated the bulk of its delegates on Super Tuesday, with the Saturday figures from county conventions and caucuses.

The latest AP delegate count gave Dukakis 575.5 delegates to 510.55 for Jackson and 362.8 for Gore. Simon had 171.5, Gephardt had 154 and 289.65 were uncommitted. To nominate, 2,082 delegates are needed.

Gore was in New York, where he was making a country-club appearance in wealthy Westchester county speaking to Jewish leaders in Brooklyn.

Jackson and Robertson were both in California on Sunday.



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