

Press Republican: Rolland Thomas tapped for Franklin County undersheriff

BY: Denise Raymo

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MALONE — A few days into his second term, Franklin County Sheriff Kevin Mulverhill named Rolland Thomas his undersheriff.

Thomas will replace Patrick White, who is suspended and under investigation by a special prosecutor for allegedly ordering a deputy to target county legislators for arrest.

Thomas is a retired correction officer, the code-enforcement officer for the Town of Dickinson and Town of Moira, and former chairman of the Franklin County Republican Party.

His pay as undersheriff has not yet been established; his job begins Jan. 18.

'JUST ONE TERM'

Under county law, a sheriff must name an undersheriff within 10 days of taking office; the district attorney, treasurer and county clerk must also choose deputies within that time frame.

A deputy, or second in command, must be identified and certified with the County Clerk's Office to preserve the continuity of county business in the event something happens to the duly elected official, said County Clerk Kip Cassavaw.

From the start of his first term as sheriff in 2011, Mulverhill said, he and White had an understanding that White would serve as undersheriff for just that term.

"I began a new term as of Friday, when I took the oath of office," the sheriff said, and was free to name anyone he wanted to the position for the next four years "Plus (White) is close to retirement age anyway," Mulverhill said.

He was quick to praise White for his work with the Sheriff's Department, saying, "we accomplished a great while he was here. I have the utmost respect for him.

"He was an outstanding employee who went above and beyond to make sure we ran a safe and secure facility."

ACCUSATIONS

White was suspended on Oct. 1 at his own request after Deputy Luke Crompton brought forth alleged evidence to the District Attorney's Office that the undersheriff ordered him to follow legislators home from local bars and charge them with driving drunk.

Crompton was one of eight deputies on the Sheriff's Department staff with full policing powers to make arrests.

He pulled over Legislator Guy "Tim" Smith (D-Fort Covington) on Aug. 15, 2014, and charged him with driving while ability impaired.

Smith eventually pleaded guilty in Malone Town Court to failure to obey a traffic-control device, paid a \$150 fine and \$92 in court surcharges.

CROMP SUSPENDED

Cromp was suspended in September, a few days after he sparked the investigation of White, on internal charges that he failed to properly supervise a murder suspect while she was in an interview room with her defense attorney.