

# PRESS-TELEGRAM

## Long Beach Police Chief Jim McDonnell to run for L.A. County Sheriff

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LONG BEACH >> Six months after deciding he would not pursue Los Angeles County's top law enforcement job, Long Beach Police Chief Jim McDonnell announced Monday that he will indeed run for the county post.

McDonnell, who joined the Long Beach Police Department in 2010, said he will continue to serve as head of the department while he runs for the job vacated by longtime Sheriff Lee Baca. Baca announced last week that he would not seek re-election amid allegations of mismanagement, corruption and misconduct by deputies in the jail system. The primary is June 3.

McDonnell's announcement Monday occurred shortly after the Press-Telegram first reported he intended to run for sheriff.

McDonnell, who initially decided last July not to enter the race because of the extensive capital and time needed to contest Baca, said he can now mount a successful campaign with the compressed timeline and less-demanding fundraising effort.

"That was basically a deal breaker right there," the longtime Long Beach resident said of the first attempt. "There was no way I was going to have Long Beach be second place to a campaign. So I figured if it was meant to be, there would be some other way."

McDonnell joins a growing list of contenders that include Patrick Gomez, retired sheriff's lieutenant; Bob Olmsted, retired sheriff's commander; Paul Tanaka, former undersheriff; Lou Vince, a Los Angeles Police Department detective supervisor and sheriff's

reserve deputy; and Todd Rogers, assistant sheriff and Lakewood vice mayor.

At last week's news conference at Sheriff's Department headquarters in Monterey Park, Baca said Assistant Sheriff James Hellmold and Rogers were strong candidates to replace him. Olmsted, though, did not shy away from mentioning McDonnell and called him a political opportunist in a statement.

"The only thing I didn't hear in Jim McDonnell's announcement was 'thank you' for my efforts to take out Lee Baca, creating the environment for political opportunists like McDonnell to run," Olmsted said.

Olmsted told the FBI about the abuse in Los Angeles jails, which many said led to Baca stepping down last week. The American Civil Liberties Union accused him of condoning "savage beatings" of inmates, and the blue ribbon Commission on Jail Violence concurred there had been a "failure of leadership" over the jails.

"I'm proud to have worked with federal authorities to expose corruption in the Sheriff's Department and taking a stand when no one else, including McDonnell, would do so," Olmsted said.

McDonnell, who highlighted his experience as a police chief as well as his involvement in state and national leadership positions, said running for sheriff was a chance to help an organization recently entrenched in controversy. He serves as a commissioner of the California Commission on Peace Officers' Standards & Training and is the

immediate past president of the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association.

"It might be an opportunity to be helpful there, having been through a major organizational change with LAPD and coming into Long Beach as an outsider developing relationships and building credibility," he said.

McDonnell said he has studied the social factors leading to incarceration today, such as mental health issues and drug addiction.

"We have a myriad of social issues all coming together," McDonnell said. "We put people in jail and in prison, but we don't do what we could ... so that we make some meaningful change."

In a news release announcing his candidacy, McDonnell's campaign featured the names of 20 people who have endorsed him, including Mayor Bob Foster and Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey.

"He's been a very good chief," Foster said. "I would love him to stay as the chief of Long Beach, but in terms of the greater good, it's a larger job. The sheriff's office is certainly in need of help. Jim is very well-suited to make the reforms and to be able to help the department and that would help everyone in L.A. County."

Lacey said she has worked with McDonnell since his days at the Los Angeles Police Department. McDonnell previously served as second in command at the LAPD. He is the immediate past president of the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs' Association and served for 29 years in the LAPD.

“He has a reputation for being a grounded, smart, thoughtful leader,” she said.

Lacey said she hopes to change the way those with mental illness and drug addiction are treated by the criminal justice system, but needs a partner in the Sheriff’s Department. McDonnell would make a perfect partner, she said.

“You need a leader who leads by example,” Lacey said.

And McDonnell is that kind of leader, she said.

“He inspires others to want to please him,” Lacey said.

However, McDonnell has faced critics of his own over the high number of officer-involved shootings in Long Beach in 2013 and police brutality allegations after a Labor Day video showed an officer striking a man with his baton as other officers stood by.

Jeff Adler, a longtime political consultant based in Long Beach, said that McDonnell is a viable candidate with an unblemished record in terms of scandal and connections in Los Angeles.

“He represents the largest city in Los Angeles County outside of L.A. and he came from the LAPD,” Adler said. “He’s a first time candidate — that’s never a good thing, but the field you mentioned, there’s no name that stands out.”

Fundraising and endorsements will be key in this race, Adler said.

“Running countywide is a very expensive proposition,” he said. “There are a lot of voters you’ve got to reach. It’s a costly undertaking. You’ve got to be very organized. Endorsements are important in this race to gain legitimacy. You need enough money to raise your name ID in this race.”

McDonnell said he does not see himself as a politician.

“The goal at the end of the day is to be able to put the shine back on the badge,” McDonnell said. “That’s a goal that I believe is achievable and that I would certainly be privileged to work toward.”

If none of the candidates receives more than 50 percent of the vote on June 3, a runoff would be held Nov. 4 and the winner sworn in Dec. 1.



## **Endorsements for Jim McDonnell**

Here’s a list of high-profile people who have endorsed Long Beach Police Chief Jim McDonnell for L.A. County Sheriff, provided by his campaign:

Walter Allen III, Mayor of Covina

Charlie Beck, Chief of Police, City of Los Angeles

Bert & Jane Boeckmann, former President, L.A. Police Commission & owners, Galpin Ford

Tony Cardenas, Congressman

Rick Caruso, former President, L.A. Police Commission

Steve Cooley, former Los Angeles County District Attorney

Mike Feuer, Los Angeles City Attorney

Bob Foster, Long Beach Mayor

Felipe Fuentes, Los Angeles City Councilmember

Fred Gaines, Mayor of Calabasas

**Lloyd Greif, former Chair, Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation and Los Angeles Police Foundation**

Terry Hara, Deputy Chief, Los Angeles Police Department

Bob Hertzberg, former Assembly Speaker

Don Knabe, Los Angeles County Supervisor

Jackie Lacey, Los Angeles County District Attorney

State Senator Ted Lieu

Nury Martinez, Los Angeles City Councilmember

Alan Skobin, former Vice President, Los Angeles Police Commission

John Van de Kamp, former California Attorney General & Los Angeles District Attorney