

EXCLUSIVE: Morales Likely To Be Reappointed Milwaukee Police Chief, But With Limited Term
By Mark Belling, WISN-AM

Milwaukee Police Chief Alfonso Morales is likely to be reappointed Milwaukee police chief this week but may receive a shorter contract than his predecessors.

The Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission is to meet later this week but sources close to Morales say he has been in discussions with more than one member of the commission about receiving a new contract. Morales was named chief last year by a divided commission to fill the remainder of former Chief Edward Flynn's term. Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, who appoints the commission, reportedly favored the other finalist for the position. Morales' term is up in January and I reported several weeks ago that the commission had not scheduled a performance review for Morales or offered him a new contract. Since then, a number of Morales' supporters have openly lobbied for him to be reappointed.

Barrett has replaced two members of the Fire and Police Commission and recently hired a new executive director, Griselda Aldrete. This fueled speculation Morales was going to be fired. If there is a compromise it is likely to be the term of the contract Morales agrees to. Flynn had a pair of four-year deals but Morales' new contract may be shorter. Morales said on WTMJ-AM this week that he expects the employment situation to be resolved this week. Indeed, there is now a scheduled Fire and Police Commission meeting.

Milwaukee mayors have long wanted police chiefs under their thumb but it has never worked out that way, largely because the chiefs generally have long contracts and are relatively free to do what they want.

Morales is widely popular in the police department and with many in the community. He is considered a traditional law-and-order cop and has moved aggressively to reinstate police pursuits and reverse other decisions made by Flynn. What Morales is not is a Democrat and Barrett may have wanted a committed Democrat in the position during next summer's Democratic National Convention.

Morales was under consideration by the Trump administration to be the new U.S. Marshal for Eastern Wisconsin but declined because of his desire to be Milwaukee chief.

It should be stressed there is no official deal in place and at least some commissioners may still want to bounce Morales but indications are Barrett is now leaning toward a reappointment but at less than four years.

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October 1