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Pay is key for cops stepping up to Mike

By PHILIP MESSING

Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg's relationship with the NYPD's rank and file is likely to be defined by his ability to convince them of continued City Hall support during times of crisis.

Despite the ill will of some cops toward Mayor Giuliani for his unwillingness to boost their pay, they know they have been able to count on him for unstinting support in their day-to-day battles against crime.

But soon, it will be Bloomberg's turn to find a way to convey his emotional support for their labors and maintain their morale in the face of the city's tight finances.

"The cops may not have always felt that Giuliani put his money where his mouth was, but they recognized his background was in law enforcement, and they respected him for that," said one Bronx lieutenant of Giuliani, a former federal prosecutor.

When Patrick Dorismond, a 26-year-old unarmed security guard, was killed in a controversial shooting by undercover cops in March 2000, Giuliani was quick to offer his support for the officers involved, while lambasting Dorismond's reputation by releasing his juvenile record.

The move was widely acknowledged as a mistake, but won him support among the cops on the street. Patrick Lynch, the head of the Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, remains hopeful that Bloomberg will provide what Giuliani could not.

"Now, maybe we'll have a mayor we can sit down and negotiate a fair contract with," he said through a spokesman. "We look forward to working with the new mayor to solve the department's recruitment and retention crisis."

Many police officials acknowledge that cops want one thing — raises — more than anything else.

"It's hard to tell a young cop to put on a bulletproof vest for $30,000 a year when they feel that, even in tough times, they can earn $50,000 a year changing the toner in a copy machine somewhere," explained one senior police official.

Bloomberg does not share Giuliani's pedigree as a former federal prosecutor, but if he provides the same type of emotional support to their efforts, it may not matter as much, observers said.

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