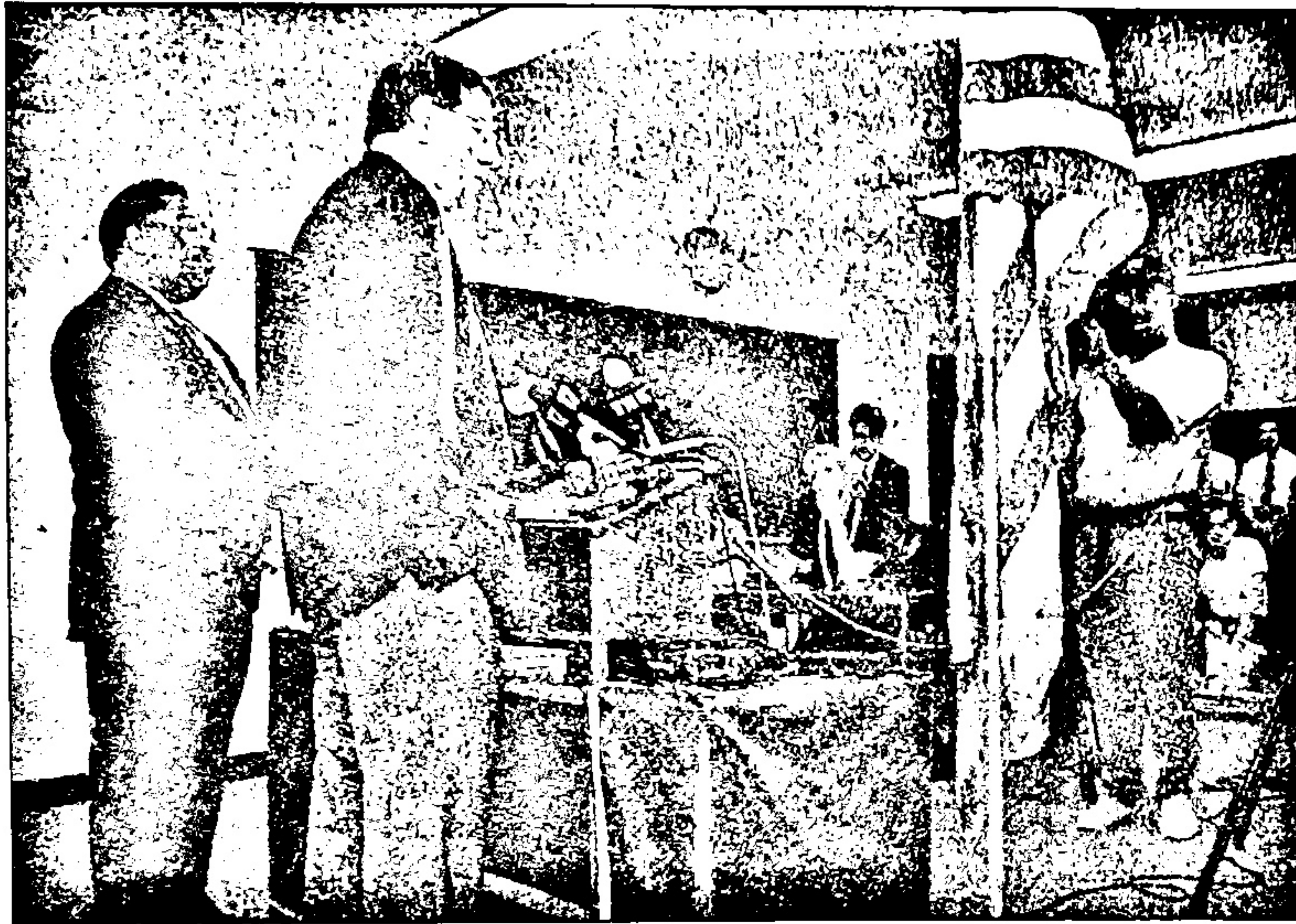


Top cop to step down



L.E. BASKOW/The Register Star

Mayor Charles Box (left) joins Police Chief William Fitzpatrick for Thursday's news conference at the Public Safety Building.

Chain of command

The administrators who serve directly below Police Chief William Fitzpatrick and who could become candidates to succeed him:

Dominic Iasparro, deputy chief for operations
Jeff Nielsen, deputy chief for administration
Jeff Morris, assistant deputy chief for operations
Steven Pugh, assistant deputy chief for administration

Rockford police chiefs

1985-present: William Fitzpatrick
1965-1985: Delbert Peterson
1953-1965: Thomas Boustead
1942-1953: Folke Bengston
1940-1942: Charles Manson
1894-1940: August Bargren
1890-1894: E.L. Tisdale
1884-1890: unknown
1866-1884: Thomas Sully

■ Chief Fitzpatrick announces he will retire next year

■ He says he will defend himself against misconduct allegations

By **SCOTT WILLIAMS**

The Register Star

ROCKFORD — Facing a misconduct investigation by a police commission to be named today, Police Chief William Fitzpatrick Thursday announced plans to retire after 10 years as Rockford's top cop.

Fitzpatrick called an afternoon news conference to announce he will step aside next year. But first, he said, he will defend himself against allegations of misconduct in the ongoing disciplinary case against Lt. Joseph Rinaldo.

"I've never been known to run away from any problem," the 48-year-old chief said. "And I won't run away from this one."

Mayor Charles Box joined Fitzpatrick for the announcement and expressed support for the chief.

Box, however, said he would name a new Board of Fire and Police Commissioners today and forge ahead with an investigation of Fitzpatrick. If the commission finds wrongdoing, he said, the chief could be disciplined or fired before his retirement next July.

"This, by no means, shortcuts that process," he said.

Fitzpatrick, who earns \$78,750 a year, said he was an-

INSIDE

■ **Looking back:** A look at highlights of Fitzpatrick's career.

■ **Rinaldo case:** A chronology of the deer hunt investigation.

Both on 4A

nouncing his retirement plans a year in advance to allow "an orderly transition of leadership" in Rockford's 280-person police force.

Box said he will ask the new police commission, whose three members must be confirmed by the city council, to search for a chief while they conduct the Fitzpatrick investigation.

Box said he did not expect the commission to look at outside candidates for the chief's job. Applicants are likely to step forward from among the handful of deputy police chiefs and assistant deputy chiefs who serve below Fitzpatrick.

Many were present for Thursday's announcement as more than 20 department brass, rank-and-file officers and city officials filed into the Public Safe-

Please see **Top cop**, 4A▶