

Police chief charged

Thunder Bay Police Chief J.P. Levesque has been charged with breach of trust and obstructing justice.

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Thunder Bay Police Service chief J.P. Levesque has been charged by the OPP with breach of trust and obstructing justice. (tbnewswatch file photo).

THUNDER BAY – City police chief J.P. Levesque has been charged with breach of trust and obstructing justice following a five-month investigation by the OPP.

The charges against the 53-year-old Levesque were announced Tuesday afternoon in a provincial police news release.

In January, the OPP received a request from the RCMP to conduct an

investigation, with the case referred to an OPP criminal investigations branch major case manager.

Specific details about the nature of the charges have not been released, with the OPP media release noting the provincial police will not be commenting further.

The Thunder Bay Police Services Board "has to date limited information regarding the nature of these charges," according to a statement in the news release issued on behalf of the board.

"As the matter is before the courts we will not be making a public comment," the statement added.

The board also said Levesque is currently on medical leave.

"The public can be assured that the members of the Thunder Bay Police Service will continue to serve and protect our community," the statement reads. "We have full confidence in Deputy Chief (Sylvie) Hauth and our senior command staff to lead the TBPS through this challenging time."

Levesque was appointed police chief in 2011 after serving as deputy chief since 2009.

Brian Gover, the lawyer representing Levesque, issued a statement calling the police chief "a person of outstanding good character."

"He is known in Thunder Bay, the surrounding area and throughout the policing community as a thoughtful, progressive and compassionate leader," Gover said. "As a police officer, Mr. Levesque has served the people of Thunder Bay in an exemplary manner for 30 years, including as Chief of Police since July 2011. Mr. Levesque looks forward to fully responding to the allegations against him, and to his ultimate vindication."

Levesque is expected to be in court on June 13.

The charges have not been proven in court.