

BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION

March 2, 2022

8:30 a.m. – Peoria, Illinois

MEETING WAS HELD ELECTRONICALLY - ZOOM

ROLL CALL

The Board of Fire & Police Commission meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lynn Pearson.

Commissioner's present: Lynn Pearson, William Watkins, John Williams, and William Spears

Commissioner's absent: Leonard Unes, Tom Burke, and Kelly Petersen

Others present: Affirmative Employment Specialist Debra Bush, Police Chief Eric Echevarria, Police Captain Earnest McCall, Fire Chief James Bachman, Assistant Fire Chief Shawn Sollberger, and Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer Melodi Green

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

William Watkins motioned to receive and file the minutes of Regular Meeting February 2, 2022 as presented; seconded by John Williams; all approved 4-0.

COMMUNICATIONS

A. Letters of Commendation – Police Officers Thomas Bieneman, Justin Mitchell, Brandon Kientzle, Nehemiah Doyle, Aaron Legaspi

B. Recognition Day Letters – Police Officers Dillon Kelly, Patrick Nesterowicz, Justin Kirby, Rachel Kindred, James Krider, Travis Ellefritz, Keegan Riedell, Matthew Prest and Sergeant Brett Lawrence

William Watkins motioned to receive, and file communication A and B, as presented; seconded by Bill Spears; all approved 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Timeline and Recruiting Efforts

Fire Chief Bachman stated they had finished up their Firefighter written examination process and they had about 54 take the examination. We are waiting to get the results of the examination to see how many will be in the Eligibility Pool.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that Fire Battalion Chief Tony Cummings, Captain Bobby Anderson, Captain Marcus Rutledge, and Division Chief Roland Tenley in coordination with the Tri-County Urban League to put on a mock written test at their facility for a few days.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that they also had a diverse panel of interviewers from the community including former and current PFD personnel, a school board member, a bank vice-president, local high school principal, a member of Peoria Park District management and a member of the Urban League management staff to help with mock interviews for the candidates.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that by having these mock sessions, he hoped it would help with more people passing the written examination and doing well when they go through the interviewing process with the department and the Commission.

Regular Meeting

Debra Bush stated that Fire Captain Rutledge sent her an update on the test preparation and mock interview sessions, which was as follows:

The first session 2/16/2022 had 11 participants.

The second session had 18 with seven attending a second time.

(10 of the 22 participants were from protected class applicants.)

There were 23 participants for the mock interviews at the Urban League on 2/20/2022 and 3/1/2022.

Police Chief Eric Echevarria stated that he finally had the opportunity to see the full procedures of the written examination physical ability and testing process.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that they have a list of 22 that are being submitted to request to hire later in Executive Session.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that he had the opportunity to meet the candidate that is a Code Enforcement Inspector on the list before he started here when he went out on a Neighborhood Clean-Up. She said that she wanted to become a Police Officer and the Chief told her to start getting ready and start working out to get ready and she is #1 on the current list.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that he got a chance to try the Physical Ability Test along with Assistant Chief Bradley Dixon and he passed the test without being prepared.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that they will start picking dates to begin the next testing process and that there is one candidate left on the list from the prior pool that will be hired for the next Academy.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that they will need nine applicants off the new list, but they are talking with other academies to see if they can get more slots.

Police Captain Earnest McCall stated that they plan to hire the first 15 candidates off the hiring list of 22 and get the P.O.W.E.R. tests scheduled and then move them along in the hiring process.

Police Captain McCall stated that he spoke with the staff at the Decatur Police Academy, and they agreed to hold two (2) positions for their Spring academy, and they have 10 spots being held at the Champaign Police Academy for April, which would be a total of 12 candidates going to PTI.

Police Captain McCall stated that they have another 10 spots reserved in Champaign for the September class.

Police Captain McCall stated they will be opening the application process for Police Cadets since they lost two Cadets to being hired as Peoria Police Recruits.

Police Captain McCall stated that they are working on their Explorer program and the first thing they are having is an Open House on March 16, 2022 to begin that process.

Police Captain McCall stated that they will be doing different recruiting by being visible at schools, grocery stores, malls, day cares, etc., to do what it takes to find good candidates.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that there are six out of the 22 candidates that reside in Peoria and received the five points for living in Peoria, plus there are several women on the list.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

William Watkins moved to adjourn to Executive Session under 2c (1) of the Open Meetings Acts, seconded by Bill Spears; all approved 4-0.

RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION

NEW BUSINESS

Lynn Pearson stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the Police Recruit Recommendation to Hire Candidates, and it will be approved as presented.

William Watkins moved to approve the Police Recruit Recommendation to Hire Candidates as presented; seconded by Bill Spears; all approved 4-0.

Lynn Pearson stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the minutes from the March 2, 2022 meeting and they will not be released per the Attorney.

William Watkins moved to approve the Executive Session Minutes of March 2, 2022 that are not to be released, seconded by Bill Spears; all approved 4-0.

Lynn Pearson asked Melodi Green the new Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer to introduce herself to the Commission.

Melodi Green stated that she was the new Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer that started in December and was happy to be able to attend the meeting and meet everyone.

Debra Bush stated that Ms. Green used to work with the City as an Attorney a few years ago and is now back in this new position and we are looking forward to working with her.

Lynn Pearson stated she was glad to see her back and was looking forward to working with her also.

Debra Bush thanked Lynn Pearson, Tom Burke, and John Williams for interviewing the Police Recruits for a few days even though we had to cancel for the winter storm, but they came back the following week to finish them.

ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business, William Watkins moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Bill Spears; all approved 4-0.

Submitted by: Debra D. Bush
Affirmative Employment Specialist

APPROVED:

Lynn Pearson, Chairperson

John Williams, Member

William Spears, Member

William Watkins, Member