

BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION

November 3, 2021

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, Tom Burke, William Spears, William Watkins, John Williams, Leonard Unes, and Crystal Gothard

Others present: Affirmative Employment Specialist Debra Bush, Police Chief Eric Echevarria, Police Captain Michael Clark, Fire Chief James Bachman, and Dr. Dawn Harris Jeffries, President & CEO, Tri-County Urban League

Chairperson Lynn Pearson thanked Crystal Gothard for her serving on the Commission and wished she could have stayed on a for a longer time.

The Commission thanked her also and wished her the best of luck in her new endeavor.

Chairperson Pearson stated that Crystal would be transferring with Caterpillar to Texas, and this would be her last meeting.

Crystal stated that she had enjoyed working with and meeting the Commission and she will miss everyone. She also thanked the Commission for the plant they had sent to her.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Burke motioned to receive and file the minutes of Regular Meeting October 6, 2021 as presented; seconded by William Watkins; all approved 7-0.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. **Request to Promote** – Fire Battalion Chief Roland Tenley to Fire Division Chief of Training Effective August 22, 2021 due to the retirement of Division Chief of Training Michael Morgan
- B. **Request to Promote** – Police Lieutenant John Briggs to the Rank of Police Captain Effective Saturday, October 9, 2021

Tom Burke motioned to receive, and file communication A and B as presented; seconded by Bill Spears; all approved 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Timeline and Recruiting Efforts

Police Captain Clark stated that there were 24 Police Recruit candidates on the list after the interviews by the department and the Fire and Police Commission.

Police Captain Clark stated that there are 16 candidates left on the list after not passing the City of Peoria POWER test, taking other positions, or declining for other reasons.

Police Captain Clark stated that there are five Recruits in the Academy and should graduate on December 6, 2021 and begin the FTO program.

Police Captain Clark stated that those slated to go to the January PTI class will need to have their paperwork turned into the Academy by December 20, 2021.

Police Captain Clark stated that they are in the process of putting together a recruitment team to help with brainstorming ideas and the meeting is scheduled for later today to discuss this project.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that at the recruitment team meeting we will be discussing places to go recruit, list of colleges and universities with criminal justice majors and military bases to contact to send information to and information on a new test.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that he wanted to switch the entry level test to the National Testing Network from I/O Solutions.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that he used this testing agency when he was in Elgin and he knows that they have a database of over 75,000 candidates and over 200 testing centers around the United States with some in Champaign and Decatur.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that he had spoken with Illinois Central College and they have agreed to be a testing center for Peoria, where they could go there and take the written examination virtually or from their homes.

Police Chief Echevarria asked the Commission if they would be willing, if needed, to do their interviews by Zoom instead of in person.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that he was looking for ways to streamline the hiring process if possible.

Leonard Unes stated that whatever the Chief recommended, he would be willing to follow.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that at the recruitment today, they will be discussing interviewing by Zoom, give out assignments to the team to reach out and find the contact persons for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Institutions, Military Transition Centers, and other schools that have criminal justice in their programs.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that he wants to do a Women in Law Enforcement Recruitment Fair which would be strictly geared for women, by women.

William Spears stated that he hopes that we don't miss out on local candidates by switching to this new test because the best Officers come from our hometown.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that is why they want to partner with Illinois Central College to become a testing center so people could walk in take the test, which creates a pathway to their Criminal Justice program and to becoming a Police Recruit.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that he is hoping to bring back the Explorer program, which is also a pathway to becoming a Police Recruit.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that the four candidates that the Commission will be reviewing their polygraphs and psychological examinations are the last candidates on the current list to hire.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that they are finishing up on their background investigations and hope to start a class in January for three or four candidates.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that they have rented a building for the CPAT test, which starts in November with the written examinations in February.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that they have information on Facebook and were at Northwoods Mall passing out information regarding the upcoming testing process.

Fire Chief Bachman stated they want to start interviews with the department and Commission when the new list is established next year.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that one of his long-term strategies was to be at District 150. They have been in Woodruff conducting classes.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that they have received permission to be in the schools quarterly to talk about being a Firefighter, what that means and showing them what they do.

Fire Chief Bachman stated that this will plant the seed to becoming a Firefighter and let them know they would be able to earn college credit during their junior year of high school.

Dawn Jeffries, President & CEO of the Tri-County Urban League, introduced herself and wanted to get caught up on the status of the Police and Fire departments.

Ms. Jeffries stated that she would like to talk about the meaning of protect and serve in the community. They are going to do a series of job fairs with the young professionals, and she wanted to understand where we were in the pipeline of getting people hired and what is needed and make it a fun activity.

Ms. Jeffries wanted to know where to find out information on the Commission and Debra Bush directed her to the website under Board and Commissions to find all the minutes of the meeting.

Ms. Jeffries and Debra Bush will be meeting to discuss the information on the commission and the hiring process for both Police and Fire soon.

Ms. Jeffries thanked the Commission for her time spent at the meeting.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Leonard Unes moved to adjourn to Executive Session under 2c (1) of the Open Meetings Acts, seconded by Crystal Gothard; all approved 7-0.

RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION

NEW BUSINESS

Lynn Pearson stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the minutes of Executive Session October 6, 2021 and they are okay to be released.

Crystal Gothard moved to approve the Executive Session Minutes of October 6, 2021 that are okay to be released, seconded by John Williams; all approved 7-0.

Lynn Pearson stated that while in executive session they reviewed the Firefighter polygraphs for candidates #F21-001, F21-002, F21-003 and F21-004 and they will continue in the process.

Lynn Pearson stated that while in executive session they reviewed the Firefighter psychological examinations for candidates #F21-001, F21-002, F21-003 and F21-004 and they were qualified so they will continue in the process.

Lynn Pearson stated that while in executive session they reviewed the Police Recruit psychological examination for candidate #P21-010 and was qualified so will continue in the process.

ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business, Tom Burke moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Leonard Unes; all approved 7-0.

Submitted by: Debra D. Bush
Affirmative Employment Specialist

APPROVED:

Lynn Pearson, Chairperson

John Williams, Member

Thomas Burke, Vice Chairperson

Crystal Gothard, Member

William Spears, Member

William Watkins, Member

Leonard Unes, Secretary