

**BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION**  
**February 1, 2023**  
**8:30 a.m.**  
**City Hall, 419 Fulton Street, Room 404, Peoria, Illinois**

**ROLL CALL**

The Board of Fire & Police Commission meeting was called to order by Vice Chairperson Tom Burke  
Commissioner's present: Leonard Unes, William Watkins, Kelly Petersen, John Williams, and Tom Burke  
Commissioners Absent: Lynn Pearson and William Spears  
Others present: Affirmative Employment Specialist Debra Bush, Police Chief Eric Echevarria, Police Captain Earnest McCall, Police Sergeant Ryan Winkle, and Fire Chief Shawn Sollberger

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

William Watkins motioned to receive and file the minutes of Regular Meeting December 21, 2022, as presented; seconded by Leonard Unes; all approved 5-0.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

- A. Letter of Commendation Letters** – Police Sergeants Matthew Lane and Ryan Winkle
- B. Recognition Day Letters** – Police Officers Joshua Feeney, Gary Lawrence, James Hodges, Amanda Chalus, Drew Flinn, and Nehemiah Doyle
- C. Completion of Probation** – Firefighters Mason Coggins, Lewis Brooks, and Cortney Smith completed probation effective January 7, 2023, and Tyler Stoecker completed probation effective January 9, 2023
- D. Request to Promote** – Promote Fire Captains William Short to HazMat Coordinator effective January 6, 2023, due to the retirement of HazMat Coordinator/Fire Captain Andrew Perry
- E. Request to Promote** – Promote Michael Pomeroy to HazMat Inspectors effective January 6, 2023, due to the reinstatement of the HazMat position
- F. Request to Promote** – Promote Fire Engineers Anthony Brodt and Daniel Donahue to Fire Captain effective January 6, 2023, due to the promotions of William Short and Michael Pomeroy
- G. Request to Promote** – Promote Firefighters Jacob Miles and Dezmond Swanson to Fire Engineer effective January 6, 2023, due to the promotions of William Short and Michael Pomeroy
- H. Request to Promote** - Promote Fire Engineer Chet Hammond to Fire Captain effective January 12, 2023, due to the retirement of Fire Captain Joseph Troglio

**Request to Promote** – Promote Firefighter Jason Benne to Fire Engineer effective January 12, 2023, due to the retirement of Fire Captain Joseph Troglio

John Williams motioned to receive, and file communications A - H as presented; seconded by Leonard Unes; all approved 5-0.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Timeline and Recruiting Efforts**

Fire Chief Shawn Sollberger stated they were going through the testing process and today was the last day of interviews with the Fire and Police Commission. He also thanked the Commission for all their hard work in getting the interviews completed so quickly.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that Assistant Fire Chief Rick Morgan had put in his paperwork to retire on February 10, 2023, unexpectedly.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that Assistant Chief Morgan had 29 years of service on the job and was an excellent Fireman who was from Peoria and a great basketball player at Manual, basically a great representation of the department and will be missed.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that brings to total needed to hire to eight, which he will working with Debra to get them started in the process after the list is approved by the Commission.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that due to the excellent training the department does, there will be 12 Champaign Firefighters, our eight Firefighters, two from East Peoria and two from Pekin that will be participating in the 12-week Firefighter class beginning on April 10, 2023.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that they had to turn eight Firefighters away due to the class being full.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated they had to be aware of how many Firefighters would need housing, training materials and instructors needed to accommodate a class when making the decision to turn away Firefighters.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that they will be trying to consistently have a spring and fall recruitment class every year to accommodate the various agencies and their hiring process.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that they will have two Interns beginning from Western Illinois University and one is an African American female.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that they will have three Junior Interns from Peoria Public Schools starting between March and April for two years.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that they have started collecting applications to have three Apprentices begin work on June 1, 2023. The Apprentices must be between the ages of 17 and 20 and have graduated from high school or received their GED certification and will be with the Fire Department for up to three years, be fully educated and certified then ready to become a Firefighter with the City of Peoria.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that after the Fire and Police Commission meeting, they would be attending a meeting to work on new billboards.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that they would be working with the Police Department on a new app called Interview Now, which will be interactive to receive calls from prospective applicants, call them back right away, and stay in touch with them through the entire testing process.

Police Captain Earnest McCall stated they are at 197 Commissioned personnel, but their authorized strength is 222.

Police Captain McCall stated that on June 23, 2023, they swore in six Police Recruits, but one was lost due to failure to pass the POWER test at the Police Training Institute.

Police Captain McCall stated they have 16 Police Recruits that are being recommended to hire so they can start the process of hiring 10 for the May 2023 Police Training Institute class.

Police Captain McCall stated that they currently have 17 White females, five African American females, 143 White males, 19 African American males, seven Hispanic and four Asian Officers.

Police Captain McCall stated that they have five Interns from Illinois State University currently working at the Police Department.

Police Captain McCall stated that their Explorers and Cadet programs were doing well.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that there was a female Firefighter Synopsis in Romeoville, Illinois that Fire Battalion Chief Lori Baxter attended and brought back different ideas that may help the City of Peoria.

Sergeant Ryan Winkle stated that for the new year of 2023, the Police Department has greatly increased its efforts in recruiting and has taken several steps to increase not only the number of applicants, but also seeking better qualified applicants.

Sergeant Winkle stated that the Police Department is implementing new efforts to improve recruiting such as:

1. Physical Fitness Team – Sergeants Amy Dotson and Ryan Winkle working to help candidates get prepared to pass the POWER test.
2. 30 by 30 – The Police Department has made the 30 by 30 pledge with a NYC based law school to increase the number of female hires with the goal of 30% by 2023.
3. National Testing Network (NTN) – The Police Department has officially joined the NTN for police testing which gives them the option of doing remote testing and proctoring our own new hire test to increase the number of applicants testing, to streamline the process and to make the testing process more flexible.
4. Interview Now – Software purchased to be used by the Police and Fire Department which is an aggressive recruiting tool and locks interested candidates in with our recruiting team, prescreens them and helps keep them active in the hiring process.
5. Recruiting Video / Female Officer Video – The Police Department is producing two high quality videos in 2023 for recruiting in conjunction with Discover Peoria for the recruitment video and using another company to produce a second video showcasing our female officers to attract more female applicants.
6. Military / College / Career Fairs – In 2023 they will be attending continue to go to career fairs and college visits. They are also implementing recruiting at military bases for 2023.
7. Billboards – They will be renewing billboards with new photos that show the diversity of our department.
8. Police and Fire Video – Will be working in conjunction with the Fire Department in producing a video “Which hero to you want to be” as a dual recruiting video.

#### **ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

William Watkins moved to adjourn to Executive Session under 2c (1) of the Open Meetings Acts, seconded by Leonard Unes; all approved 5-0.

#### **RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

Tom Burke stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the minutes from the December 21, 2022, meeting and they are okay to be released per Attorney Perkins.

Kelly Petersen moved to approve the Executive Session Minutes of December 21, 2022, that are okay to be released per Attorney Perkins, seconded by William Watkins; all approved 5-0.

Tom Burke stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the Police Recruit Recommendation to Hire Candidates list.

Kelly Petersen moved to approve the Police Recruit Recommendation to Hire List as presented; seconded by John Williams; all approved 5-0.

**ADJOURN MEETING**

There being no further business, William Watkins moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Kelly Petersen; all approved 5-0.

Submitted by: Debra D. Bush  
Affirmative Employment Specialist

**APPROVED:**

---

Tom Burke, Vice Chairperson

---

Leonard Unes, Member

---

John Williams Jr., Secretary

---

William Watkins, Member

---

Kelly Petersen, Member