

BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION
September 6, 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 Chairperson Thomas Burke
Commissioner's present: Thomas Burke, William Watkins, William Spears, John Williams, Lynn Pearson, Leonard Unes, and Kelly Petersen
Commissioners Absent: None
Others present: Affirmative Employment Specialist Debra Bush, Assistant Fire Chief Tony Cummings, Police Captain Earnest McCall, Police Chief Eric Echevarria, and Police Sergeant Amy Dotson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Tom Burke, Chairman asked for the approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of August 2, 2023, and the special meeting of August 14, 2023.

Leonard Unes motioned to receive and file the minutes of Regular Meeting August 2, 2023, and Special Meeting August 14, 2023, as presented; seconded by John Williams; all approved 7-0.

COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Burke asked for a motion to receive and file the communications as shown below:

- A. Request to Promote** – Firefighter Bradley Flessner to Fire Engineer Effective July 27, 2023
- B. Completion of Probation** – Firefighter John Prentiss effective August 26, 2023
- C. Completion of Probation** – Firefighter Shane Smith effective August 26, 2023

Kelly Petersen motioned to receive and file Communications A, B, and C; seconded by John Williams; all approved 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS

B. Business Card Discussion

Debra Bush stated that due to the Assistant Fire Chief Tony Cummings having to leave early, he would like to discuss the business cards and Chairman Burke agreed.

Assistant Fire Chief Cummings passed out the cards to the Commission, which had their names on them, and stated that when you tap the card on someone's phone, it will take you directly to the City of Peoria's website to apply, NTN Testing, and the Fire Department page. The card also has a QR code on the back, so it has a dual way to get the information.

B. Timeline and Recruiting Efforts

Assistant Fire Chief Cummings stated that they went to Manual High School and spoke to some of the kids and counselors about the Woodruff program and how the EMS program worked.

Assistant Fire Chief Cummings stated that they would be going to Western Illinois University to a career fair for recruiting efforts.

Police Chief Eric Echevarria stated that they sent 16 Police Recruits to the Police Academy, which is the largest number of Recruits that the City has ever sent at one time.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that they are at 214 and they need to be at 222. He asked the City Manager if he would over hire due to there being possibly 10 to 12 retirements from now to next year.

The proposed interview questions for Police Recruit were passed out to the Commission.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that as of right now there are two interviews being done by the Police Department and by the Fire and Police Commission, which he does not agree needs to happen.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that the Fire and Police Commission should be where all the interviews should be held due to the Police Department having mechanisms in place like the polygraph, psychological, medical and background to where candidates could have their offers of employment withdrawn.

Police Chief Echevarria took all the questions asked by the Fire and Police Commission and added those from the Police Department to come up with the current questions. Plus, there were separate questions added for a lateral Police Officer.

Police Chief Echevarria proposed that the Fire and Police Commission and the Police Department conduct the interviews together, which would be from the Police Command staff and the Commission to streamline the process.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that they want to move forward with the new process for this testing cycle, which would give them more time to conduct the backgrounds.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that they would have three command staff along with the three Fire and Police Commissioners to conduct the Police Recruit interviews.

Commissioner Petersen asked if Legal had a chance to review the proposed changes that need to be made to the Fire and Police Commission Rules.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that he had met with the Human Resources Director Mary Ann Stalcup and Deputy Corporation Counsel Chrissie Kapustka and discussed the change, they were in agreement, and didn't see any problems with changing the rules.

Kelly Petersen motioned to change the Fire and Police Commission Rules as reflected regarding the interview process and add three Police Department command staff along with the three Commissioners to the Fire and Police Commission interview panel to streamline the hiring process; seconded by Lynn Pearson; all approved 7-0.

Debra Bush stated that the Police Department will have a Police Recruit Orientation tonight, September 6, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. at the Police Department and there will also be another one on Saturday, September 9, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

Kelly Petersen stated that he would like to get a report from the Police and Fire Departments on the number of vacancies they have at that point in time along with statistical data at every meeting.

Police Captain Earnest McCall stated that they have this information and would make sure to get it for the Commission.

Commissioner Leonard Unes commended the staff and Chaplain on the work they are doing with the prayer ministry.

Commissioner Lynn Pearson commended the staff on doing a great job in the community.

Sergeant Dotson stated that there were 45 applications received and that her and Officer Chris Collins personally called, emailed, video called, and texted the individuals to submit their required documents to participate in the testing process.

Sergeant Dotson stated that they ended up with 25 in the testing process even after their efforts and the calls and emails made by Debra Bush.

Sergeant Amy Dotson passed out the Recruitment Team information for the month of August 2023, and the Military flier that was tailored to the Military for when they went to a Military Career Fair to recruit to the Commission.

Sergeant Amy Dotson stated that she had excellent news that the 16 Police Recruits that went to PTI had all passed their POWER tests that morning, which is the first item to be completed the first day.

Sergeant Dotson stated that due to time constraints, she would let the Commission review the Recruitment Team's efforts, which were as shown below.

Career Fairs:

- Springfield Chamber Job Fair
- Indianapolis Veterans Career Fair

Community Engagement

- National Night out Against Crime
- Back to School Bash, Hy-Vee at Grand Prairie
- We Love the South Side
- Birthday Buddies at Pleasant Valley Elementary

Networking

- FT Leonardwood Recruiting Discussions
- Upcoming video project

Mentoring & Peer Support

- Intern Kayla Costic – Illinois State University
- Intern Logan Delgado – Bradley University
- Intern Gunner Merrit – US Army SkillBridge Program
- Study Session for recruit officers at PTI to prepare for state exam

Applicant Engagement

- Physical Fitness Team – 3x/week utilizing PPD gym, Rock Island Train, Yoga in the Park
- Skills clinic at RC Outfitters – conditioning, stretching, nutrition, etc.

Chairman Burke asked Jim Council, Traffic Safety Engineer if he had anything new information he would like to present to the Commission.

Jeff Council, Traffic Safety Engineer passed out an updated his Roadway Worker and Responder Safety Cards the Commissioners.

Mr. Council stated that the Fire Chief had hinted to him that the direction he was going would be technically out of scope for the Commission, and he respects that.

Mr. Council felt that response to safety was important to the Commission, and this was one of his favorite audiences and he appreciates their response to his stories.

Mr. Council stated that he was excited to have the Roadway Worker and Responder Safety Cards printed on plastic.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Kelly Petersen moved to adjourn to Executive Session under 2c (1) of the Open Meetings Acts, seconded John Williams; all approved 7-0.

RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION

NEW BUSINESS

Commission Chairperson Burke stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the minutes from the Regular Meeting August 2, 2023, and Special Meeting August 14, 2023, and they are okay to be released per Attorney Perkins.

William Watkins moved to approve the Executive Session minutes from the Regular Meeting August 2, 2023, and Special Meeting August 14, 2023, and they are okay to be released per the Attorney Masum Perkins; seconded by Kelly Petersen; all approved 7-0.

Commission Chairperson Burke stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the Fire Battalion Chief Promotional List effective July 30, 2023, ;to July 31, 2025, and it will be approved as presented.

John Williams moved to approve the Fire Battalion Chief Promotional List effective July 30, 2023, to July 31, 2025, as presented; seconded by Kelly Petersen; all approved 7-0.

ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business, William Spears moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by William Watkins; all approved 7-0.

Submitted by: Debra D. Bush
Affirmative Employment Specialist

APPROVED:

Thomas Burke, Chairperson

William Spears, Vice Chairperson

John Williams Jr., Secretary

William Watkins, Member

Lynn Pearson, Member

Kelly Petersen, Member

Leonard Unes, Member