

BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSION
January 7, 2026
8:30 a.m.
City Hall, 419 Fulton Street, Room 110, Peoria, Illinois

ROLL CALL

The Board of Fire & Police Commission meeting was called to order by Chairperson Tom Burke.

Commissioner's present: Thomas Burke, William Spears, Kelly Petersen, Terry Cooper, Barry Anderson, and Mickeisha Armstrong

Commissioner's not present: Pastor Marvin Hightower

Others present: Senior Human Resources Specialist Debra Bush, Police Chief Eric Echevarria, Police Captain John Briggs, Police Officer Ciara Barker, Police Officer Christopher Collins, Police Sergeant Brian Richards, Police Lieutenant William Calbow, Assistant Fire Chief Tony Cummings, Fire Chief Shawn Sollberger, Human Resources Director Ed Hopkins and Attorney Masum Perkins

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Burke asked for the approval of the minutes from December 9, 2025, Fire and Police Commission meeting.

Kelly Petersen motioned to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of December 9, 2025; seconded by Terry Cooper; all approved 6-0.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications received.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Timeline and Recruiting Efforts

Assistant Fire Chief Tony Cummings passed out the Peoria Fire Department Demographic Report for January 2026 as shown below:

- 185 active suppression and 40-hour Fire personnel
- 171 amongst 3 shifts including Battalion Chiefs
- 14 40-hour personnel between Central and the Tower with 7.1% diversity
- 52 Captains across 3 shifts
- 51 Engineers across 3 shifts
- 62 Firefighters across 3 shifts
- 5 female Suppression personnel
- 28 minorities (15.1%)
- 28 minorities + 5 female Firefighters (17.8%)

Assistant Fire Chief Cummings stated that the current Firefighter pool demographics were as follows:

- 48 candidates remain in the hiring pool
- 6 African American males (12.5%)
- 5 Hispanic males (10.4%)

Assistant Fire Chief stated the information below was things going on that are new:

- Hiring of 2 new Fire Apprentice (making a total of 7) by June 1, 2026
- Future Spring recruit class – Starts in February 2026
 - o 3 African American males
 - o 1 Hispanic Female
 - o 1 Greek American male

Assistant Fire Chief Cummings stated that they are forecasting for the Fall 2026 recruit class by saying there will be 4-6 retirements before the end of 2026, which further enhance their ability to positively impact the diversification of the workforce.

Assistant Fire Chief Cummings stated that applications and testing for the next list will begin in 2027 and that they were motivated by the positive impact of the apprenticeship program with the potential of on boarding at least five candidates.

Fire Chief Shawn Sollberger stated that they are hiring one African American male that didn't make it through the hiring process to become a Fire Apprentice.

Fire Chief Sollberger stated that they saw something in the candidate that by being in the Apprentice program, he would become better suited to be a Firefighter in the future.

Assistant Fire Chief Cummings stated that on February 20, 2026, the new Firefighters will be sworn in the Council Chambers if anyone would like to attend.

Police Officer Ciara Barker introduced the new Training Police Lieutenant William Calbow to the Commission.

Police Officer Barker passed out the 2025 Report Recruitment Unit information.

Officer Barker stated that during 2025 the Police Department lost 22 sworn staff due to separations so by the end of 2025, the staffing levels went from 218 to 236 sworn officers.

Officer Barker stated that the Police Department was able to hire 40 officers in 2025, bringing staffing to full levels at 236.

Officer Barker stated that they attended several recruitment events at colleges and universities as well as several local community events.

Officer Barker stated that stayed engaged with diverse audiences by attending events at HBCU's, Juneteenth events, Hispanic Latino Events, the National Asian Peace Officer conference, Women in Law Enforcement events and more.

Officer Barker stated that the Police Recruitment unit was also responsible for the internship program in which 11 college interns came through in 2025, with three others from 2024 internships also being sworn in this year.

Officer Barker stated that the Police Recruitment Unit continued to focus on mentorships and physical fitness through the physical fitness team.

Officer Barker stated that this prepared candidates to pass the POWER test while also helping build leaders of those who attend regularly.

Police Chief Eric Echevarria stated that there could possibly be 17 to retire today because there about 12 Officers with 25 years of service.

Police Chief Echevarria stated that they hope to continue to over hire to make sure they stay at the authorized strength of 222.

Police Chef Echevarria stated that they were at a strength level of 236, but now down to 234.

B. Discussion, Review and approval of Fire and Police Commission and Fire Department Interview Questions and Evaluation Tools

Attorney Masum Perkins passed out the draft of the Peoria Fire and Police and Fire Commission Firefighter interview questions to review.

The Commission reviewed the questions and interview evaluation tool and made the necessary adjustments to both.

Attorney Perkins stated that she will make the corrections and updates as discussed and have the draft of the Fire and Police Commission and Fire Department interview questions and evaluation tools at the next meeting.

C. Discussion, Review and approval of Fire and Police Commission and Police Department Interview Questions and Evaluation Tools

Attorney Masum Perkins passed out the draft of the Peoria Fire and Police and Fire Commission Police interview questions to review.

The Commission reviewed the questions and interview evaluation tool and made the necessary adjustments to both.

Attorney Perkins stated that she will make the corrections and updates as discussed and have the draft of the Fire and Police Commission and Police Department interview questions and evaluation tools at the next meeting.

ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Kelly Petersen moved to adjourn to Executive Session under 2c (1) of the Open Meetings Acts, seconded by Barry Anderson; all approved 6-0.

RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION

NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of Executive Session Minutes – Regular Meeting December 9, 2025

Chairman Burke stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the executive session minutes from meeting December 9, 2025, and they are okay to be released, per Attorney Perkins.

William Spears moved to approve the minutes of December 3, 2025, executive session and they are okay to be released per Attorney Perkins; seconded by Terry Cooper; all approved 6-0.

B. Approval of 2026 Police Sergeant Promotional List

Chairman Burke stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the 2026 Police Sergeant Promotional List and it should be approved as presented.

Kelly Petersen moved to approve the 2026 Police Sergeant Promotional List as presented; seconded by William Spears; all approved 6-0.

C. Approval of 2026 Police Lieutenant Promotional List

Chairman Burke stated that while in Executive Session they reviewed the 2026 Police Lieutenant Promotional List and it should be approved as presented.

Kelly Petersen moved to approve the 2026 Police Lieutenant Promotional List as presented; seconded by Terry Coper; all approved 6-0.

ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business, Kelly Petersen moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by William Spears; all approved 6-0.

Submitted by: Debra D. Bush
Senior Human Resources Specialist

APPROVED:

Thomas Burke, Chairperson

William Spears, Vice Chairperson

Kelly Petersen, Secretary

Terry Cooper, Member

Barry Anderson, Member

Mickeisha Armstrong, Member