



BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSIONERS
Thursday, October 10, 2019, at 9:00 am
Carbondale Civic Center Room 103
200 South Illinois Avenue
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The City of Carbondale Board of Fire and Police Commissioners held a meeting on Thursday, October 10, 2019, in Carbondale Civic Center Room 103, 200 South Illinois Avenue. Chairman Kerry Braswell called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: Kerry Braswell, Randy Burnside, Gerald Edwards, and Ted Lomax

Absent: Herman Williams

Acknowledgement of Guests

Also present were Deputy City Clerk Clinette Hayes, Human Resources Manager Tara Brown, Diversity and Compliance Officer Alicia Jackson, Police Chief Jeff Grubbs, Deputy Police Chief Stan Reno, Fire Chief Mike Hertz, and City Manager Gary Williams

2. Approval of meeting minutes from August 1, 2019

During the last meeting it was asked if a candidate can use military points only one time during their career or several times. It was suggested that the City Attorney be consulted regarding the use of military points. Human Resources Manager Tara Brown spoke to the City Attorney about the matter and according to him it is up to the Board whether or not they would like to allow a candidate to use military points more than once, even though many others do allow its multiple use.

The use of military points is not covered in the Governing Rules so it was suggested that it be put on the agenda for the next meeting for discussion and/or approval for amendment.

MOTION: G. Edwards moved, R. Burnside seconded, to approve the meeting minutes from August 1, 2019. VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried.

3. Closed Meeting to Conduct Oral Interviews for Entry-Level and Lateral Entry Police Officer

MOTION: G. Edwards moved, R. Burnside seconded, that the Board hold a closed meeting for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), specifically to conduct oral interviews for Entry-Level and Lateral Entry Police Officer. VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried. Open session recessed at 9:07 a.m.

4. Return to Open Session

There was no formal action taken as a result of the closed meeting. There being no further business to come before the Board, R. Burnside moved, G. Edwards seconded, that the Board return to open session. VOTE: All voted Aye. No nays. Motion declared carried. Open session resumed at 11:12a.m. *Fire Chief Mike Hertz entered the meeting at 11:13 a.m.*

City Manager Gary Williams entered the meeting at 11:16 a.m.

5. Approval of Changes in the Oral Interview Questions and Scoring for Entry-Level Firefighter

A brief clarification on how the scoring scale will work with the oral interviews was given prior to the vote. Each question is worth up to 10 points with the last one allowing each Commissioner to give their overall impression based on the provided scale. Each candidate may receive a total of up to 100 points.

MOTION: T. Lomax moved, G. Edwards seconded, to approve the changes in the oral interview questions and scoring for Entry-Level Firefighter. VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried.

6. Discussion and Approval of Changes in the Physical Fitness Assessment for Entry-Level Firefighter

At the last meeting held on August 1, 2019, Fire Chief Mike Hertz made changes to the Entry-Level Firefighter Physical Fitness Assessment to mirror the Candidate Physical Agility Test (CPAT). For the most part, the first draft showed changes in weight and repetition requirements. Some components were removed and more relevant components were added. Removing and adding some of the components would not be a problem, however it was stated that increasing weight and repetitions may lessen the number of female firefighter applicants as it may be too difficult for them to successfully complete. At the time, the Board agreed to keep the Physical Fitness Assessment as is.

Chief Hertz presented to the Board a second draft with the same components as the first, but adjusted the weight requirements to address previous concerns of the Board. The Mannequin Drag in particular drew a lot of concern. Initially, the first draft increased the weight from 145 to 185 pounds which falls in line with the CPAT requirement. The weight was dropped back down to 145 pounds due to the previously mentioned concerns of the Board. The State requires that physical assessments are equivalent to or mirrors the CPAT. The Board felt that it will be difficult to find a reasonable explanation for the 40 pound decrease in weight regardless of the Board's concerns of the level of difficulty for some candidates. All physical components are equal across the board and each candidate must adhere to the requirements. When candidates are hired they will be required to complete the CPAT at the Academy so it is only fitting to increase the weight so candidates will be better prepared. The Board agreed that the Mannequin Drag weight requirement should be increased from 145 to 185 pounds to reflect that of the CPAT.

Components that were removed from the Physical Fitness Assessment were the Pike Pole Grip and Pull and the Agility Run. Components that were added were the Time Distance Run, Hose Drag, Equipment Carry, and Chin Ups. Descriptions on how to complete some of the components were made clearer to avoid any confusion. It was suggested that a video demonstrating how to complete each of the components could be useful for candidates when preparing for the physical assessment. Chief Hertz said that video demonstrations are already available online through CPAT.

Human Resources Manager Tara Brown informed the Board to avoid referencing applicants by gender/sex. Instead to refer all persons as candidates and/or firefighters and use general references such as them and they. The consensus of the Board was to remove all references of gender/sex from the Physical Fitness Assessment.

MOTION: T. Lomax moved, G. Edwards seconded, to approve the changes in the Physical Fitness Assessment for Entry-Level Firefighter with the noted corrections. VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried.

7. Discussion Regarding a “Grow Your Own” Program for Entry-Level Police Officer

City Manager Gary Williams presented to the Board the idea of a “Grow Your Own” program which will offer current City employees, who are in good standing and have obtained a certain amount of years of service, the opportunity to participate in the Entry-Level Police Officer examination. As it currently stands, applicants are required to have a minimum of 60 college credit hours to qualify. This program will allow eligible City employees to waive the education requirement, however they will still have to undergo the entire examination process just like any other candidate. This program would be ideal for those employed in positions with similar work responsibilities and experiences that may be beneficial in a Police Officer position. This program will give the Police Department an alternate avenue to increase their pool of candidates for the examination.

Questions, comments, and concerns from the Board included the following:

- The legality of the program
- Are we reducing our standard
- Is this an unfair advantage for those who are not employees of the City
- Is this an unfair advantage for candidates who have already obtained their educational requirement
- Should it be required that an internal candidate hold a relatable position for a certain amount of years or will any City position suffice

The Board felt that the program is a good idea and it was their consensus that further research be conducted to move forward.

8. Discussion of Alternatives for Administering the Entry-Level Police Officer Examination

Human Resources Manager Tara Brown presented to the Board the idea of administering the police examinations off site at job fairs and other employment events out of town and out of state. Representatives from the Human Resources office would travel to job fairs and follow the same application process. Those who are interested will fill out an application and receive a candidate preparation manual. The actual examination will take place the following day where the written (multiple choice) and writing proficiency will be administered. The written exam will be graded upon completion while the writing proficiency will be sent off for evaluation. Those who pass both portions will be notified of the physical fitness assessment and the oral interview which will be administered back on site at City Hall.

There is a law enforcement program, for example, in the Chicago area that services several thousand students in public safety. Traveling with the police exam could potentially attract a more diverse group of candidates from larger and similar cities. This will make it more convenient by traveling to the candidate and potentially cut down on their travel time. Other municipalities have traveled with their police exam for several years some of whom hold their exam here in Carbondale.

Questions, comments, and concerns from the Board included the following:

- How many job fairs will be attended per year
- Costs associated with travel to job fairs
- Will this affect staffing in the Human Resources office
- If HR staffing is affected, should a representative of PD travel to assist with the exam
- Problems/issues that could surface if PD were to be involved with the examination

The Board felt that this is a good idea and it was their consensus that further research be conducted to before making a decision.

9. Discussion about a Proposed Amendment to the Governing Rules that would allow the use of Remote Testing Companies

Similar to the previous discussion item that was presented by Human Resources, Police Chief Jeff Grubbs presented to the Board another alternative to administering the Entry-Level Police Officer examination. This option would allow an outside entity to administer and proctor the police examination off site. SIU Testing Services, located in Morris Library, is a certified testing lab which has administered the GRE, SAT, ACT, and other exams on SIU campus. The application process will remain the same, however SIU Testing Services will be the ones to actually administer the police examination at their facility for a \$250.00 fee (for each cycle) as many times as needed throughout the year. If the program is successfully implemented this could lead to the police examination being administered in the same way at other colleges or universities with similar testing services. This type of outreach would bring in a larger more diverse pool of candidates who are enrolled in law enforcement programs to the Carbondale Police Department. The logistics of how the exams will be ordered, transported, scored, and paid for has not yet been determined.

The Board felt that this is something that could be beneficial, but requests further research and an idea of how the process/procedure will work. Possibly a representative from the SIU Testing Services could attend a meeting to explain how their process works and how it can be used to meet the needs of the Board.

10. Discussion of an Amendment to the Governing Rules regarding the Lateral Entry Hiring Program to include an Accelerated Entry Hiring Program

Police Chief Jeff Grubbs presented a possible amendment to the Governing Rules that would include an Accelerated Entry Hiring Program which is similar to the Lateral Entry program which is currently implemented. The Lateral Entry program requires candidates to have a minimum of two years' experience as a regular full time police officer and has graduated from a law enforcement training academy (in state or out of state). The proposed Accelerated Entry program will accept candidates who have less than two years' experience as a regular, full time police officer and has graduated from a full time, part time, or pre-service law enforcement training academy (in state or out of state). Both Lateral and Accelerated Entry candidates' academy training must be equivalent to and approved by the Illinois Law Enforcement Training & Standards Board. Accelerated Entry will include candidates who have no police officer experience, but can use their law enforcement academy training to make up for their lack of experience. For some, their only experience will be attending the academy.

This option, just like the Lateral Entry program, will save time and money since candidates will not need to attend the academy. That can take up to 16 weeks and cost thousands of dollars. If this program is implemented the candidates will basically be hired and go straight into field training providing that their academy credentials are approved by the State. It was the consensus of the Board that more research and additional information be presented in order to make a decision.

11. Board Comments

None

12. Citizen's Comments

None

13. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

Clinette C. Hayes, Deputy City Clerk

Approved by the Board on _____