



**BOARD OF FIRE AND
POLICE COMMISSIONERS**
Thursday, September 21, 2023, at 9:00 am
Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The City of Carbondale Board of Fire and Police Commissioners held a meeting on Thursday, September 21, 2023, in Carbondale Civic Center Room 103; 200 South Illinois Avenue. Vice Chair Randy Burnside called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Randy Burnside, Tom Busch, Mike Dissmore, and Linda Flowers

Commissioners Absent: None

Acknowledgement of Guests:

Also present were Deputy City Clerk Clinette Hayes, Human Resources Director Tara Brown, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Coordinator Sharonda Cawthon, Police Chief Stan Reno, Deputy Police Chief Tony Williams, Deputy Police Chief Matt Dunning, Community Resource Officer Gerald Edwards, and Fire Chief Mike Hertz.

2. Citizen's Comments - None

3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from August 11, 2023

MOTION: T. Busch moved, L. Flowers seconded, that the Board approve the meeting minutes from August 11, 2023. VOTE: All ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried.

4. Closed Meeting to Conduct Oral Interviews for Entry Level Police Officer

MOTION: L. Flowers moved, T. Busch 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 Police Officer. VOTE: All Ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried. Open session recessed at 9:04 a.m.

5. 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, L. Flowers moved, T. Busch seconded, that the Board return to open session. VOTE: All Ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried. Open session resumed at 9:10 a.m.

6. Certify the 2023 Final Promotional Eligibility List for Fire Captain and Assistant Fire Chief

MOTION: T. Busch moved, M. Dissmore seconded, to certify the 2023 final promotional eligibility lists for Fire Captain and Assistant Fire Chief. VOTE: All Ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried.

7. Discussion of Chapter IV, Review of Citizen Complaints, from the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners Governing Rules

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Coordinator Sharonda Cawthon participated in the Carbondale Inclusion Task Force, which issued a survey to the public between August 2022 and January 2023. Part of the survey was on the interaction between citizens and the City of Carbondale police officers. The results revealed that some citizens have had unfavorable interactions with officers from the past and questioned the review process of citizen complaints in a fair and honest manner. It was found that in 2008, the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners added to their duties by reviewing citizen complaint appeals (Chapter VI of the governing rules). It is also listed in the City of Carbondale Revised Code 1-14B-5C, “Duties of Board”. The review process for citizen complaints, as outlined in the Board’s governing rules, is very vague with very little detail. Therefore, City Staff proposed an update to the Governing Rules with a detailed process of reviewing citizen complaint appeals making it clear and concise for a better understanding.

It was suggested to add to the amendments the steps one needs to go through to begin the appeals process (i.e. how to file an appeal, where to obtain an appeals form, submitting the appeals form). It was asked how the public can be made aware of their right to file an appeal to their complaint. Suggestions were the City’s website, social media, and have available hard copies of the process for those without computer or internet access.

Revisions of the proposed updates to the governing rules will be brought back to the Board for further discussion, if needed, and approval at the next meeting.

8. Discussion Regarding the Residency Requirement for Police Officers and Firefighters

Commissioner Burnside initiated the discussion regarding residency requirements for police officers and firefighters. He stated that the residency boundary is causing the City to miss opportunities to bring in potential entry-level and lateral-entry police candidates. There are existing difficulties competing with other municipalities for candidates including the State of Illinois. Requiring residency further complicates recruitment for the police department. On the other side of the residency boundary issue are those who believe that law enforcement will better serve the community if they reside inside the community, therefore making them a part of the community and more invested in it and its people. Commissioner Burnside provided excerpts from articles saying that there is no evidence that supports the idea of law enforcement employees having a better job performance if they reside in the community in which they serve. Also provided was a listing of municipalities that do or do not require residency, have an extended residency boundary, or if the residency requirement only applies to certain ranked personnel. Discussion occurred among members of the Board and City Staff. Comments and concerns included putting the culture of Carbondale at risk if the boundary is expanded, opening Carbondale up to less cultured candidates, negative impacts on law enforcement persons who live inside the City (i.e. property damage, harassment), response time, and doing what it takes to make Carbondale a more competitive market for law enforcement candidates.

It was the consensus of the Board to request the City Manager to attend the next meeting at which time further discussion can take place and the Board can put together a proposal for City Council consideration.

9. City Staff Updates / Comments

Police Chief Stan Reno gave an update on the candidates who recently completed their time at the academy and those who are currently in field training. The police department is looking forward to testing and hiring candidates in time for the next academy in January.

With the news of Mr. Braswell resigning from the Board, there is a vacancy for the position of Chairperson of the Board. Currently Commissioner Burnside is the Vice Chairperson. Deputy City Clerk Clair Hayes informed the Board that they have two options in regards to that position. First, the Board can continue to conduct business with Commissioner Burnside officiating over the meetings as Vice Chair. Should he be unable to attend a meeting the remaining members can decide who will run the meeting. This option will last through the remainder of the fiscal year term, which ends on April 30, 2024. Second, the Board can opt to hold an election to appoint a new Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. This option will also last through the remainder of the fiscal year term, which ends on April 30, 2024. It was the consensus of the Board to hold an election at the next scheduled meeting.

10. Board Comments – None

11. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 10:39 a.m.

Clinette C. Hayes, Deputy City Clerk

Approved by the Board on