



**BOARD OF FIRE AND
POLICE COMMISSIONERS**
Thursday, October 19, 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 9:03 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, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Coordinator Sharonda Cawthon, Police Chief Stan Reno, Community Resource Officer Gerald Edwards, and Fire Chief Mike Hertz.

2. Citizen's Comments - None

3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from September 21, 2023

MOTION: T. Busch moved, L. Flowers seconded, that the Board approve the meeting minutes from September 21, 2023. VOTE: All ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried.

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

MOTION: T. Busch moved, M. Dissmore 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 9:05 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, T. Busch moved, L. Flowers seconded, that the Board return to open session. VOTE: All Ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried. Open session resumed at 9:16 a.m.

6. Election of Board Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

The Governing Rules of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners provide that a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson be elected in April, to serve for one municipal fiscal year (May 1 through April 30).

With the resignation of Commissioner Kerry Braswell, who served as Chairperson, the Board will need to elect a new Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to serve in those capacities for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2024, ending on April 30, 2024.

Vice Chairperson Randy Burnside opened the floor for nominations.

Vice Chairperson Randy Burnside was nominated to fill the expiring term for Chairperson for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2024, ending on April 30, 2024. There were no objections.

MOTION: L. Flowers moved, T. Busch seconded, to nominate Randy Burnside to fill the expiring term for Chairperson for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2024. VOTE: All Ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried.

Commissioner Tom Busch was nominated to fill the expiring term for Vice-Chairperson for the remainder of Fiscal year 2024, which will expire on April 30, 2024. There were no objections.

MOTION: L. Flowers moved, M. Dissmore seconded, to nominate Tom Busch to fill the expiring term for Vice Chairperson for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2024. VOTE: All Ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried.

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

At the previous meeting held on September 21, 2023, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Coordinator Sharonda Cawthon presented to the Board amendments to the governing rules as it pertains to the review of citizen complaint appeals. The board discussed the amendments and suggested a few changes.

After updating the amendments with the noted suggestions, Mrs. Cawthon presented the board with two options for both the amendments and the form for citizens to complete for their complaint appeal. It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with “Version B” of the amended language and the complaint appeals form. Version B of the amendments outlines in detail the process of filing an appeal with the Board and notes that the “Board’s determination on the disposition of the complaint is final”. It was also the consensus of the Board to move forward with “Option B” of the Complaint Appeal Form which added the question “Did you contact the department to discuss the disposition of the Original Complaint? If so, please provide a brief summary of the explanation provided by the department.” per the request of Police Chief Stan Reno. The rest of the Complaint Appeal Form requested detailed information pertaining to the incident that is being appealed.

MOTION: L. Flowers moved, T. Busch seconded, to accept Version B of the amendments to Chapter IV of the Governing Rules and Option B of the Complaint Appeals Form. VOTE: All Ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried.

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

9. Discussion of Amendments to Chapter II, Section 1 (Police Eligibility) of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners Governing Rules

***** Note: During the course of discussion, agenda items 8 and 9 inadvertently became one combined discussion. Therefore, below is one summary of both items. *****

At the last meeting held on September 21, 2023, the Board discussed the residency requirement for police officers and firefighters as well as the educational requirement for police officers. Both topics have been discussed in previous meetings over the years as being a deterrent for recruitment causing the respective departments to miss opportunities to potentially hire good quality candidates. Lowering the educational requirement for police officers went as far as consideration by the City Council, but was put on hold because of concerns from Council and the public as a whole. More information was requested, but the topic was never brought up again since the Council meeting in 2022. The residency requirement has only been a topic of interest in recent months.

The City Manager had requested for the Board revisit the educational requirement and have a discussion with him at the next regular meeting. Since the topic of residency had been recently discussed, the Board decided to include residency in the discussion with the City Manager.

The Board again discussed both topics and came to realize that this may be too much change at one time. It is possible that pursuing one over another could be a better strategy because there are very strong concerns about both. In this case, each topic has a heavy impact in the ongoing problem of recruitment and retention and no matter which policy is chosen to be amended, either could significantly help recruitment if they were changed in some way.

Rather than present a recommendation to the City Manager it was the consensus of the Board to further discuss it with him and offer their views on the matters.

10. City Staff Updates / Comments

Police Chief Stan Reno gave an update a candidate who is currently in the academy expecting to be complete in December. He also said there have been quite a few entry-level applicants in the last few weeks and the police department is looking forward to testing and hiring candidates in time for the next academy in January.

Human Resources is in the process of trying to schedule Table Talks (formerly 5-on-5) for the community to have open conversations with police officers and vice versa.

Chief Reno mentioned that a possible candidate to fill the Board member vacancy has been forwarded to the Mayor and City Manager by Fire Chief Hertz.

11. Board Comments

In light of former Commissioner Kerry Braswell's resignation, the Board wanted to recognize his 11 plus years of service to the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners with 7 of those years as the Chairperson of the Board. During all of his years of service, Mr. Braswell never missed a board meeting and always conducted himself in a professional manner.

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

Clinette C. Hayes, Deputy City Clerk

Approved by the Board on