



**BOARD OF FIRE AND
POLICE COMMISSIONERS**
Monday, December 5, 2023, at 9:00 am
Special Meeting Minutes

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The City of Carbondale Board of Fire and Police Commissioners held a special meeting on Tuesday, December 5, 2023, in Carbondale Civic Center Room 103; 200 South Illinois Avenue. Chairperson Randy Burnside called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Roll Call

Commissioners Present: Randy Burnside, Tom Busch, Mike Dismore, Linda Flowers, and John Michalesko

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, Fire Chief Mike Hertz, Director of Violence Prevention Programs Dianah McGreehan and City Manager Gary Williams.

2. Citizen's Comments

Dianah McGreehan, Director of Violence Prevention Programs, introduced herself to the board and her role with the City of Carbondale.

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

MOTION: T. Busch moved, M. Dismore 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 Lateral Entry Police Officer. VOTE: All Ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried. Open session recessed at 9:05 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, T. Busch moved, J. Michalesko seconded, that the Board return to open session. VOTE: All Ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried. Open session resumed at 9:15 a.m.

5. Approval of the Meeting Minutes from October 19 and November 6, 2023

MOTION: L. Flowers moved, T. Busch seconded, that the Board approve the meeting minutes from October 19 and November 6, 2023. VOTE: All ayes. Nays – None. Abstain – J. Michalesko. Motion declared carried.

City Manager Gary Williams entered the meeting at 9:18 a.m.

6. Continued Discussion on Educational Requirements and Residency Requirements

In dealing with recruitment difficulties within the police department, three areas have come up during Board discussions over several meetings that seems to have the most negative effects on recruiting entry-level police candidates. They are the age requirement, the residency requirement, and the educational requirement. When compared with surrounding municipalities, the county, and the State the Carbondale Police Department has the most restrictions on their candidates making it difficult to compete and miss the opportunity to hire good quality candidates.

There is an item regarding the maximum age requirement already on this agenda. To avoid repeating the same information please refer to item #7 of these minutes.

Concerning the residency boundary, some believe that police officers will better serve the community if they reside within the community, which makes them a part of the community, more invested in it and its people, and potentially increase job performance. However, there is no evidence that supports that theory. Some also believe that expanding the residency boundary will put the culture of Carbondale at risk, which will make the City vulnerable to less cultured candidates. Regardless of the concerns of the residency boundary, this issue is not specific to the police department, but it is to the city as a whole. If changes were to occur, it will affect all departments of the City making this topic something for the City Council to decide.

Education is another barrier with police recruitment and causes the department to turn away applicants who do not meet the requirement. The educational requirement for police officers went as far as being considered by the City Council in 2022. The police department proposed to the Board to lower the requirement to a high school diploma, which they approved and forwarded the amendment to the governing rules to City Council for approval, but there was no action taken because of concerns from Council and the public as a whole. The original educational requirement remained as is, which is to have an Associate's degree or the equivalent number of hours of at least 60.

It was the consensus of the Board to try a "phased in" approach where changes are implemented in increments rather than all at the same time. Using this strategy can show the effects of one change by itself then layer it with another, if necessary, to invoke better results. Since the age maximum requirement is already being presented to the Board (see item #7), it is best to begin with that and see how it helps recruitment.

7. Approval of an Amendment to Chapter II Section 1-A (Police Eligibility Requirements) of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners Governing Rules

With the police department continuing to experience challenges with recruiting and hiring officers an amendment to the governing rules was presented to the Board. The maximum age requirement for hiring police officers, according to the State statute, is 34 years. The age requirement presents challenges to the police department because other surrounding departments such as the Illinois State Police and the Jackson County Sheriff's Department do not have age restrictions in place, which makes it difficult for the police department to compete in this area for applicants and reject those who do not meet the age requirement. The City of Carbondale can exercise its home rule authority to modify the statute and raise the age requirement. In this case, the police department proposes to raise the maximum age to 39 years in order to increase the potential to hire more candidates.

MOTION: L. Flowers moved, T. Busch seconded, that the Board approve the amendment to Chapter II Section 1-A of the Board of Fire and Police governing rules that will increase the maximum required age for entry-level police officers from 34 to 39 years of age. VOTE: All ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried.

8. Approval of the Schedule of Regular Meeting Dates for Calendar Year 2024

Deputy City Clerk Clair Hayes explained to the Board that the meeting dates will continue to be the third Thursday of each month with the exception of October. October is when Ms. Hayes goes out of town for an annual, week's long Municipal Clerk's training. Moving the meeting to the fourth Thursday in October will allow more time to prepare for that month's meeting.

MOTION: T. Busch moved, L. Flowers seconded, that the Board approve the schedule of regular meeting dates for calendar year 2024. VOTE: All ayes. Nays – None. Motion declared carried.

9. City Staff Updates / Comments

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Coordinator Sharonda Cawthon announced that the City Council approved the Board's governing rules amendment regarding the appeals of citizen's complaints. She stated that the complaint application reflects the Board's suggested changes and will be placed on the City's website very soon.

Deputy City Clerk Clair Hayes stated that the governing rules will be updated to reflect those amendments.

10. Board Comments

Deputy City Clerk Clair Hayes stated that since this special meeting was held today that there will not be a regular meeting next Thursday, December 21. The Board will resume its meetings in January.

11. Adjournment - Meeting adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Clinette C. Hayes, Deputy City Clerk

Approved by the Board on