

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of Merit System Commission

Held February 4, 2026

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 9:01 AM.

Mary Woeste	Chair	Absent
James Kempe	Vice Chair	Present
Tom Watts	Member	Present
Gina Delph	Member	Present

Mr. Watts moved to excuse Mrs. Woeste's absence; Mr. Kempe seconded the motion.

RESULT: Passed (*Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0*)
MOVER: Tom Watts
AYES: Jim Kempe, Tom Watts, Gina Delph
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None

Approval of Minutes

Merit System Commission Meeting Minutes - December 4, 2025

Mr. Kempe asked if there were any changes or corrections to the December 4, 2025, Merit System Commission meeting minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Business

Full-Time Firefighter (Entry Level) - Certify List

Fire Chief Traci Kuzminski distributed a list to the Merit System Commission members. She noted over 25 applicants were interviewed, and she discussed the rankings and elimination.

Mrs. Delph moved to approve the Full-Time Firefighter (Entry Level) list; Mr. Watts seconded the motion.

RESULT: Passed (*Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0*)
MOVER: Gina Delph
AYES: Jim Kempe, Tom Watts, Gina Delph
NAYS: None
ABSTAIN: None

Full-Time Mechanic - Entry Level - Discussion

Mr. Chris Dunn stated a mechanic left the Street Division recently. He reviewed the job qualifications posted in 2016 and those posted in 2021. He noted that in 2016, a CDL was required to be obtained within one year of employment. He stated that in 2021, a Class B CDL was required to be obtained within one year. He noted that the Street Maintenance worker requirements have changed and applicants are required to possess a CDL when hired. He reported that he believes the City should require this position to possess a CDL as is required of the Street Maintenance employee. He reviewed the extensive CDL requirements, and he remarked that there would be issues with the starting pay. He reported he reached out to several businesses who pay new mechanics \$30.00 per hour with no experience. He said the mechanic position requires a CDL, five years of experience, and five ASE certifications, and the starting pay is \$22.00-\$23.00 per hour. He said he does not feel like there will be many applicants considering the requirements and pay. He asked if requirements need to be changed

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before an ad goes out?

Mr. Kempe noted there have been several discussions regarding CDL requirements in the past. He stated the City will not attract good applicants without a competitive salary, but the Merit System Commission has no control over salary.

Mr. Dunn and the commission members discussed the entry level position for the Street Division employees.

Mr. Watts asked what the Street Division is asking for in an entry-level mechanic position?

Mr. Vietor explained entry-level vs. lateral entry. He said this position requires an entry-level process and not a lateral entry process.

Mr. Watts said entry-level to him means no experience.

Mr. Dunn said he is trying to find out if the commission is okay with the mechanic position mirroring the Street Maintenance Worker position and requiring a CDL? He did note that requiring a CDL will limit the applications received.

Mr. Kempe said it sounds like Mr. Dunn has a fairly good list of requirements, but he feels Mr. Dunn is unsure if all need to be requirements. He said it sounds like once the requirements have been defined, surely there are resources here at the City to help ensure the salary range is appropriate for the area; otherwise, there is no point in discussing this.

Mr. Dunn said there is no need to change that, but if someone is overqualified, maybe they can begin at a higher rate on the scale. He asked if the commission would be okay with him bringing back an ad that changes the requirements.

Mr. Watts said he would be okay with that as long as Mr. Dunn thinks the requirements are something he is willing to stick to for a minimum of ten years as an entry-level position. He said once this is posted, those conditions cannot be changed and lowered again. He said the position cannot be posted with requirements and then, in a year from now, change the requirements. He noted that would be unfair to the employee who was hired under other requirements.

Mr. Dunn said the last employee was hired in 2017, so he does not feel that will be an issue. He spoke about the possibility of talking to the union representative regarding probation period qualifications. Mr. Dunn stated the only requirement should be a CDL and to obtain the ASE certifications in the first year. He said reducing the requirements to apply might help get applicants in the door. He said he does not understand why a lateral process does not apply to the Street Division.

Mr. Watts and Mr. Kempe recommended Mr. Dunn bring back the changes to the commission, and they will follow the next steps.

Mr. Kempe recommended that Mr. Dunn talk to the union to see if they are comfortable with the changes,

Mr. Dunn said he will talk with the union representative and bring something back to the commission. He questioned if a lateral position is something that can be revisited in the meantime in case someone decides to transfer over.

Mr. Watts said he is 100 percent on board with a lateral position, but Ms. Dillon was the one who quashed that topic. He said he does not think it is a law but was just Ms. Dillon's opinion.

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City Manager Michael Davis discussed requirements, but the conversation was inaudible.

The commission and Mr. Dunn discussed requirements across City departments.

Mr. Dunn reported that in the near future, a test will be needed to promote an employee to Operator II. He said one employee has issues with the testing. He stated he will have something for the commission to look at for the March meeting. He said he will talk to the employee regarding the issues he is having with the testing, and he may have something to bring back regarding that topic.

Other Business

The next Merit System Commission meeting was scheduled for March 4, 2026.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 AM.



James Kempe



ATTEST: Public Information Officer, Aaron Vietor