

# RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of Merit System Commission

Held December 14, 2023

**Call to Order**

Merit System Commission Meeting Call To Order at 11:03 AM

|                |        |         |
|----------------|--------|---------|
| Mary Woeste    | Chair  | Present |
| Jim Kempe      | Member | Present |
| Dave Rodehaver | Member | Present |

Staff Members Present: City Manager Michael Davis, Police Chief Craig Richardson, Deputy Police Chief Jason Neubauer, HR Administrator Brittany Runnels, Public Information Officer Aaron Vietor, and Clerk of Council Amy Brown.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Merit System Commission Meeting Minutes - October 5, 2023**

Mrs. Woeste asked if there were any changes or corrections to the October 5, 2023 Merit System Commission meeting minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

**Business**

**Police Sergeant Promotional Process**

Chief Richardson explained they have received an additional Sergeant position in next year's budget, and they would like to promote from within. He noted the advertisement has been included in the packet, and added he would like to begin advertising as soon as possible to give the candidates four or five weeks to study. He explained they would do an internal exam like they did last time, and stated he had written a large bank of questions to pull from. He reported he would have the study materials ready as soon as the ad is posted, and added everything is now digital.

Mr. Kempe noted that in the ad, one of the required items of knowledge is the geography of the City, and asked if there were study materials available for that.

Chief Richardson replied they have an official map that they use, and added he could put a Google Maps link in the study materials.

Mr. Rodehaver made a motion to approve the Sergeant Promotional Process advertisement.

**RESULT:** Passed, *(Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0)*  
**MOVER:** Dave Rodehaver  
**AYES:** Mary Woeste, Jim Kempe, Dave Rodehaver  
**NAYS:** None

**Lateral Entry Police Officer Process**

Chief Richardson reported they concluded the lateral entry process, and explained they would have two candidates starting on January 8. He stated they received eight applications, interviewed three applicants, and the remaining applicants were disqualified for various reasons. He noted that the list was exhausted and no one else would be hired from that list. He commented that they need another process, and it wouldn't be a good time to do an entry level process because there are no academies in session right now. He asked to start another lateral entry process and at the conclusion of that process, it would probably be a better time to do an entry level process.

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Mrs. Woeste asked how many officers they needed.

Chief Richardson responded, three with the new Sergeant, because they would promote the Sergeant from within so that would create a third vacancy. He requested to terminate the current lateral entry list that has been exhausted and create another lateral entry process.

Mr. Kempe made a motion to approve the Lateral Entry Police Officer advertisement.

**RESULT:** Passed, *(Yes 3, No 0, Abstained 0)*  
**MOVER:** Jim Kempe  
**AYES:** Mary Woeste, Jim Kempe, Dave Rodehaver  
**NAYS:** None

## MSC Rule Change Discussion - Age Restrictions for Police Officers

Chief Richardson explained the maximum age for an initial appointment for a Police Officer is 35, unless there is local legislation declaring that it can be another age. He noted they have been discussing for several years about coming up with our own local rule that gets rid of the age restriction altogether. He reported they have encountered many applicants that don't make it under that 35-year-old age limit, but they are still physically fit and still have plenty of time to work as a Peace Officer. He stated he spoke with the Law Director, and she wanted to address it with the Commission members to see what their thoughts were. He noted then they would come up with a Merit System rule change or a legislation item to declare another age or no age restriction.

Mrs. Woeste commented that the age used to be 33, and then it was raised to 35 in the ORC. She stated she didn't have any problem with it because there are a lot of people in their 40s who are extremely fit and could do the job.

Mr. Kempe asked if the local rule was more or less restrictive than the state.

Chief Richardson replied it couldn't be more restrictive, so they couldn't make it 30, but they can make it whatever they wanted or nothing at all.

Mrs. Woeste asked if there was a way to put a stipulation that they have to pass not only a physical, but also an agility test of some kind after a certain age.

Chief Richardson responded he didn't know if that could be done. He explained they have to pass many physical tests, and they also have a voluntary physical fitness program that is very well-attended and there are incentives for that program. He added if they pass the physical and they can complete the police academy, he wouldn't have any issues with a certain age. He commented there are stipulations that they can send somebody for a fitness for duty evaluation if they think they are having issues, but it has nothing to do with age, it's just about physical abilities.

Mrs. Brown noted if it is listed in the rules, there would also have to be a rule change.

Chief Richardson stated that the Law Director wanted to make sure it was okay with the Merit System Commission before she proceeded, but he didn't know if she had determined if it was going to be a Merit System rule change or actual legislation.

The members were in agreement to raise the maximum age limit for officers.

Chief Richardson replied he would let the Law Director know, and he would update the Commission members at a later date.

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Other Business - None

Adjournment

Adjournment at 11:22 AM.



Mary Woeste



ATTEST: Clerk of Council Amy Brown