

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of Merit System Commission

Held August 1, 2024

Call to Order

Merit System Commission Meeting Call to Order at 11:00 AM

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

Staff Members Present: Police Chief Craig Richardson, Fire Chief Traci Kuzminski, Human Resources Administrator Brittany Runnels, Public Information Officer Aaron Vietor, and Clerk of Council Amy Brown

Approval of Minutes

Merit System Commission Meeting Minutes - July 11, 2024

Mrs. Woeste asked if there were any changes or corrections to the July 11, 2024 Merit System Commission meeting minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Business

Proposed Change of Practice - Hiring Process

Chief Richardson noted that they have discussed in the last couple of meetings about what they could do to quicken the hiring process. He reported there is information included in the packet regarding four items that could be changed in the hiring process. He stated the first item was in regard to continuing to run an advertisement until the position was filled. He explained the Law Director said that could be done as long as they abide by the three-week advertisement rule. He noted the second item concerned running ads for the Entry Level and Lateral Entry Level positions at the same time. He reported the Law Director stated they could do that if they deleted the word "emergency" in the lateral entry rule, and they could also run the ads until the position was filled. He noted they have been in a constant cycle of Entry Level and Lateral Entry Level hiring, and he would suggest deleting the emergency language because it's been a constant emergency lately. He stated the third item was a question regarding if the test had to be a written test. He explained that the ORC is quoted in the Merit System Commission rules regarding what the test can be, and it can be any number of things. He stated it could be a written test, a performance evaluation, physical skills test, or an oral interview that is scored and weighted. He reported that the Law Director listed those items and added those proposed changes to the rules and also referred to the ORC. He noted the fourth item was regarding if they began these processes, then once a month they would submit the listing of applicants and their scores to the MSC, and that list could be certified by the Commission. He explained that the Law Director said there would be no changes needed to the rules in order to do that. He commented that these changes would affect all the departments, but they would still be able to choose whatever process they want, and added that these changes would just give different options.

Mr. Kempe remarked that looking at the four types of examinations listed, he understood the first three because they have existing structures like that. He noted that the fourth type seems to be a formal way of providing measured evaluation of certificates, and confirmed that it was for bonus points, certifications, and veteran status.

Chief Richardson replied that was correct, and added the bonus points would fall into that category.

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Mr. Kempe asked if would be reasonable to accept candidates that had no testing or performance evaluation as referenced in the fourth type.

Chief Richardson answered there are applicants that are just going into the academy or just getting out of the academy, but they would do the scored panel interview.

Mr. Kempe stated he was concerned about the language that reads like the candidate wouldn't need to go through any of the first three qualifications.

Chief Richardson replied that for Entry Level, you would need at least one qualification from the first three listed. He noted that it would work for another department that requires other certifications, but it shouldn't necessitate having all four items, it just gives them options.

Mrs. Woeste confirmed that when someone fills out an application, the department wouldn't just be looking at the qualifications in item number four. She noted they would be called in for a scored panel interview.

Mr. Kempe stated, yes, but he would like to see the language state "any one or more of the following four items". He added he wanted to make sure they would actually be having that interaction with the candidates, because what the practice is and what is stated on paper can be two different things.

Chief Richardson noted he couldn't imagine hiring someone without interviewing them. He commented that he thought that item four would deal with the technical aspects of qualifications.

Mrs. Woeste confirmed that regardless, they would be having an interview.

Chief Richardson replied, yes, absolutely.

Mr. Kempe stated he just wanted to make sure they would be having an interview, and added he was just bringing up a concern about the wording.

Chief Richardson noted that everything would start with an application, and added that the language was straight from the ORC.

Mrs. Woeste stated that with the language that the Law Director included, they could have a first reading today.

Mrs. Brown stated that they could, but she had a couple questions. She confirmed that the advertisement would still come before the Commission to be approved.

The Commission members confirmed they would still approve the advertisements.

Mrs. Brown commented that they would then have a monthly list that Chief Richardson would provide to include in the packet, but that listing would have to be clearly outlined, so the Commission could certify the list. She noted she wanted to make sure that they were keeping track of that listing.

Mrs. Woeste confirmed that was correct.

Chief Richardson stated they could provide the names, method of testing, scores, and current status on the Friday before the meetings.

Mrs. Brown stated that as far as the advertisement, she knew that the Chief spoke to Mr. Vietor

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about it, but it can't be an indefinite ad, it has to be set for a three or six-month limit.

Chief Richardson stated that was correct, and added that Mr. Vietor would post a three or six-month application process, close it for a few hours and then open it again because it can't be a continuous advertisement.

Mrs. Brown noted if there was a change to the position, they would have to bring that new ad back to the MSC for their approval.

Chief Richardson replied, yes, if there are any changes to the ad. He noted that MSC rules are written so it has to go in the paper, but most of the applicants are getting their information from police-related websites, Monster, or Indeed. He explained when they advertise, it causes the ad to also be posted to Monster and Indeed.

Mrs. Woeste noted that running the ad for six months seemed like a long time, and suggested running the ad for three months, shutting it down for a couple of days, and then re-posting so it keeps popping up on the job websites.

Mrs. Brown asked Chief if they would still be planning on doing the PHQs in-house.

Chief Richardson confirmed they would be doing the PHQs in-house, and added they have been handing out paper copies to the candidates to let them take home and complete.

Mr. Rodehaver asked if this would all coincide with the conditional offer that they were talking about at the last meeting.

Chief Richardson answered, yes, and added it doesn't really matter when they give the conditional offer because they still have to complete all the same steps, it's just a change in the order of steps. He noted they were thinking of giving a conditional offer after the scored panel interview and then an immediate background check before the first polygraph. He explained that would get the candidates interested sooner, and they could be hired sooner. He stated they are currently looking at hiring three or four officers.

Mrs. Woeste asked how many retirements they had coming up.

Chief Richardson responded they would have at least one next January, and it would be a Sergeant position. He noted they would have to shuffle people around and have to do a test.

Mrs. Brown asked if they were still going through the current Entry Level list.

Chief Richardson answered, yes.

Mrs. Woeste stated at this point, it would be good to do the first reading so they can get the process underway. She noted that under Section Four, they were just removing the emergency language.

There was further discussion regarding the emergency language with regard to the Lateral Entry process in Section Four.

Chief Richardson noted in that section, there shouldn't be a change because there is no emergency clause in Section One.

Mr. Kempe commented that currently the emergency situation is deemed by the Commission, and if they remove that language, how would the Lateral Entry process be initiated.

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Chief Richardson stated they would hire both Entry Level and Lateral Entry at the same time because they would be getting these pools of candidates, and it would be a concerted continuous effort to hire both. He noted that Section One and Section Four should stay as they are because they wouldn't do a Lateral process unless it was necessary. He stated he would speak with the Law Director again to confirm that the language should stay as it is.

Mrs. Woeste commented that if they were doing the Lateral and Entry Level processes at the same time, what would make them choose one over the other.

Chief Richardson replied that there are so few applicants that it wouldn't matter. He commented the background checks weed through over half the candidates almost immediately, and they would be scored and be continued through the process. He explained if they advertise for a month and start doing the panel interviews, the best thing would be to keep them separate, but they would be scored on the same interview. He stated they would choose the best candidate at that point at the end of the month and provide the Commission with a listing of the best candidates and how they ranked. He noted it was still important to keep both processes open and not combine them. He stated if they would like to wait to have the first reading, he can speak with the Law Director regarding Sections One and Four.

Mrs. Woeste asked the Commission members if they would be able to meet between now and the next meeting if the Law Director is able to address the question regarding Sections One and Four before then.

The Commission members agreed, and added they would be available.

Other Business - None

Adjournment

Adjournment at 11:34 AM


Mary Woeste


ATTEST: Clerk of Council Amy Brown