

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF
REGULAR MEETING DECEMBER 17, 2013**

To Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

Roll Call: Present were Members Russ Friedrich and Chairman Jim Yost.
Absent was Member Dan Zezena.
Also present was Fire Chief John Reese, Assistant Law Director Toni Morgan
and Recording Secretary Donna Tjotjos.

Minutes:

Chairman Yost asked if there were any corrections to the minutes. He entertained a motion.
It was moved by Yost and seconded by Friedrich to approve the minutes dated
November 19, 2013 as presented.
MOTION CARRIED

Reports:

Recording Secretary Tjotjos noted members receipt of the 2014 Calendar of Events for Civil Service Commission which may change based on changes to the examination date for Firefighters. Also reported was specific colleges that were contacted to advertise the examination date within their departments. Only one college responded to the request to advertise and that was Cuyahoga County Community College. No response was provided from Lorain County Community, Hocking and Kent State.

Chief Reese asked that Bowling Green University be contacted as well.

Recording Secretary noted that during the last meeting, it was also requested that the Fire Chief be contacted to provide his opinion based on the new Ohio Revised Code change which affected the age qualification of those candidates who may be appointed. She asked him to attend to provide his response to Civil Service.

Unfinished Business:

Chairman Yost explained that back in 2006, Civil Service asked Council to change the ordinance to limit the starting age to 31 instead of 41. Since then, the State decided to raise it to 41 and somewhere along the lines; between Civil Service and Council, we forgot to eliminate the reference to Ohio Revised Code. Because the age is stated in the Ohio Revised Code, Civil Service has to adhere to that as well as our ordinance which also refers to the Ohio Revised Code. Right now, Civil Service could request Council amend that section of the ordinance to eliminate that reference to the Ohio Revised Code. He explained that the Civil Service Commission wants to make sure that the Rules and Regulations only refer to the maximum age of appointment as age 31.

Chief Reese explained it is his belief the problem with age 41 is that right now, as far as he knows, the City has a mandatory retirement age of 65 for the safety forces. So if he hires a guy at the age of 41, he will never make his retirement. He stated that they will get rid of him before he reaches the age of 66 to retire. The other issue is the pension system. They are encouraging the fire employees to stay under 60 years old and the way they are doing that is that they raised the retirement age to 52 and at age 52 an employee can opt to retire or opt into the DROP program. The DROP program is eight years and so it is perceived that they are encouraging the firefighters to retire at age 60. If we choose to refer to the Ohio Revised Code, he would be forced to hire a candidate that is at his age and right now, he has a wrap on his arm and had his Achilles tendon rebuilt and if that is the case with a new hire, he won't make it. It will cost the City a fortune.

Chairman Yost stated that those are all the concerns that were discussed with the Commission.

Assistant Law Director Morgan addressed the Chairman. She stated right now, Civil Service is stuck with the age 41. She stated that Civil Service Commission will need an amendment passed by Council with the emergency and she will look into whether or not that can be done. She asked how this will affect advertising the upcoming exam.

Chairman Yost explained that it will affect advertising the upcoming exam; however the amendment could go through three readings in time to advertise for a new test as the current eligibility list does not expire until May 22, 2014. The advertisement will need to be placed in February to test in March instead of testing in January in order for an eligibility list to be completed by the beginning of May. The exam scheduled thus far for January has not been advertised and will be postponed until this issue of concern is addressed correctly.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked if the Commission would like her to prepare the amendment by the next meeting or before the next meeting.

Chairman Yost stated that he would like the recommendation done tonight. He stated that the Commission would like to recommend that Council eliminate the reference to Ohio Revised Code.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that she would have to draw up legislation to do that and will provide it as soon as possible.

Chairman Yost stated that he would like that reference removed from the Rules and Regs also. He continued to state if the test was given in January, we would have to adhere to the Ohio Revised Code based on the Ohio Revised Code being referenced in the Rules and Regulations and codified ordinances.

Chief John Reese stated he is trying to hold off on hiring until that new list is prepared because the current list is so old and they are so far into it. He explained that he has a 41 year old guy who is going out on permanent disability that is never coming back to work because he injured his back. So, he is trying to hold off in hiring.

It was moved by Friedrich and seconded by Yost to recommend Council amend section 248.03 with legislation that the Law Department will prepare.

MOTION CARRIED

Recording Secretary noted that because this recommendation is being made to Council, the amendment to the Rules and Regulations will have to be postponed until after Council takes action on the recommended amendment.

New Business:

Certified and Eligibility List Update:

After review of the current firefighter/paramedic eligibility list, the Fire Chief pointed out that number 6 on the top 10 refused an appointment and needs to be removed.

Recording Secretary Tjotjos asked if he would like another name. That name would be candidate number 21 on the list.

Chief Reese responded yes.

Recording Secretary noted that the remaining order of business on the agenda will need to be postponed as it relates to the amending ordinance going to Council.

Chief Reese stated he had one more item to discuss that has to do with promotions for the Fire Department. He went on to explain that some cities have the one of three rules where they are given the top three names and they promote any of those three. He stated that the contract limits them as to what they are able to do. He read the contract as it says they have the right to use an accredited Assessment Center and an interview process, which we don't. He explained that as of right now, the Fire Department could promote individuals who have poor performance or are currently being placed under disciplinary action based on the test scores they received. He stated some of these guys pass the test, but are not actually able to perform their job. He explained his current situation with current officers.

Chairman Yost asked if there was a personnel evaluation intact and asked if it is being utilized.

Chief Reese explained the current weighted score percentages for written exam is 60% and assessment center is weighted at the remaining portion. His thoughts are to request a change

to the weighted score of the assessment center to 20% and have the top six officers in the department interview the promotional candidate with a weighted score of 20%.

Chairman Yost asked if that would be contrary to the contract.

Chief Reese indicated that it would go along with the contract.

Chairman Yost stated that it sounds as though it is needed.

Chief Reese believes the way the current process is, is insane because the Fire Department Officers don't have any say in who is promoted. It isn't based on performance or evaluations or nothing. It is just basically, who can score the highest.

Recording Secretary explained that the current Rules and Regulations in reference to Fire promotions refers to the ORC section which states that the top ranked score candidate fills the open vacancy in promotion.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked if the Recording Secretary could email those sections to her and she can review and research it.

Chief Reese read the contract again in which it includes an interview process.

Recording Secretary noted that the contract does not refer to who interviews. Whether it is an outside source and Civil Service Commission has always used the Assessment Center as the interview process performed by an outside source.

Chief Reese stated that what he is suggesting is that the written remain at 60 and the Assessment Center at 20 and the interview process at 20. He stated that it would be done in a fair manner where six of the officers would make up the board and vote. He stated that he is not so concerned about the Captain's position on up. His concern is that initial promotion to Lieutenant.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked if that contract language refers to everyone or just Lieutenants. She asked if the Chief was looking to use it for all promotions or just the Lieutenants.

Chief Reese stated that he would use it for all promotional ranks if he could.

Chairman Yost asked if the Assistant Law Director could look into that issue.

Chief Reese addressed the Commission and asked if they could make 20% of the promotional process based on the interview.

Chairman Yost asked if that would be enough.

Chief Reese stated he believes that would be the fairest.

Member Friedrich stated that it would avoid having a conflict with the union.

Chief Reese stated that the union may still complain, but, he is hearing complaints from them regarding the bosses they get that can't do their jobs.

Member Friedrich agreed with the six guys as a panel, but there is also the other side of the coin, where there may be a few who railroad a guy who is up for promotion. Such as one of the bosses may not like someone so they don't promote them. He stated that he likes the idea of having six guys to make it fair.

Chief Reese explained the interview process with the candidates who are being hired in as Firefighters.

Recording Secretary asked for clarification in which rank this process will be utilized.

Chief Reese stated that to make it fair, it should be Lieutenant on up.

Recording Secretary stated that there aren't enough candidates taking the promotional exam for each rank. It would negate even providing a written exam for only two candidates.

Chief Reese stated that for Lieutenants there would be six officers. For the Captains, it would be a little bit harder. He explained that when it gets to the Chief's level, the City would have to bring in other Chief's from surrounding areas to make it fair.

Recording Secretary explained there is a separate contract for Chief and Assistant Chiefs. They do follow the Fire contract, however, the Mayor appoints from all levels; specifically the Chief and right now it is the top ranking candidate that is being appointed.

Chief Reese stated that the big worry is Lieutenant because they generally do not have Lieutenants that are in trouble. He stated that once they make it to that level, they are pretty sharp usually. He stated that the problem is when they get to that level and they never should have been; the department is stuck with them forever. There is no way of getting rid of them.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated she would look into the Rules and Regulations to make sure that there isn't anything in there that will throw a monkey wrench into it.

Recording Secretary Tjotjos stated she would forward the sections to Toni for her review.

Chief Reese asked if the Commission could start shopping for agencies that give promotional exams. Again, he explained that the last one was so, so and he believes that there is more than one out there and he would be willing to help the Commission shop them. He noted that the Ohio Fire Chief's Association wanted crazy money the last time. He explained that Clancy is going to be the cheapest overall because it is basically a two man show and no matter who the Commission looks at, they will be the cheapest.

Commission Members directed the Recording Secretary to research agencies that provide promotional examinations.

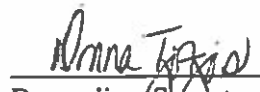
Chief Reese mentioned that the Entry Level Background document used for the last entrance exam was the best as it weeded out most of the candidates. He explained that Bay Village is going to join his staff in doing the same background checks as it helped them out tremendously. They just had a few of our candidates in which the background had already been completed by us.

Adjournment:

It was moved by Yost and seconded by Friedrich to adjourn the meeting.
MOTION CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 6:52 P.M.


Chairman James Yost


Recording Secretary

January 21, 2014
Date Approved