



City of
LAWRENCE
Indiana

FIRE DEPARTMENT

MERIT COMMISSION MINUTES



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April 1, 2021

The monthly meeting of the Merit Commission was held at the Lawrence Government Center, Lawrence, Indiana. Those in attendance were as follows:

Commissioners:	Amy Coats	Vice President
	Thomas Taylor	Commissioner
	Damonn Burns	Commissioner
	Randy Warman	Commissioner

CLFD:	Dino Batalis	CLFD Fire Chief
	Robert Wallace	CLFD Deputy Chief
	Kalie KD	CLFD Admin Assistant

Call to Order: Vice Pres. Amy Coats called the meeting to order at 18:04 hours and led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by prayer given by Randy Warman.

Fire Chief's Comments: Chief Batalis thanked everyone for being in attendance tonight and would like to mention a few things. In hopes of helping our department become more diversified, he has reached out to establish a partnership with the Indianapolis Black Firefighters Association. There will be a workshop on April 12th to assist with filling out applications, getting documents/ID's copied, etc. for the firefighters hiring process. The hiring process begins tomorrow and will end on May 7th, 2021.

Amy asked how many spots will be available and the Chief explained that our lists are good for two years. Spots open as people retire, move on or get promoted. He also explained in detail how the hiring process is done. The Board understands and had no questions.

Approval of Minutes: Vice President Amy Coats asked the Board to table the approval of the previous minutes due to it being so long since the last meeting. The Board agreed unanimously.

Old Business: Chief Batalis mentioned that Samantha Bassey has retired and the next person on the list to take her position is Nicholas Rehmel. Paperwork will be started on Monday.

April 15th, two new firefighters will be sworn in as well as others who were promoted to Lieutenant.

New Business: Chief reminded everyone that the hiring packets were sent to the Board members before the meeting. An ad has been put in the newspaper and the announcement will also be put on

the city's website, as well as social media. The hiring process takes months to finish and our current list expires in September.

Chief Wallace informed the Board that we are using a different company for the written portion of testing. The old test focused on mathematics and analytics; however, in addition to these two components, the new test also focuses on character traits. This will hopefully match our department to firefighters on a deeper character level. He is also hoping this will increase the population that we can choose from. A third-party company grades the tests and our department does not have access to the questions or answers. This is done to ensure fairness and non-bias scoring.

Amy stated that everyone has had a chance to look over the hiring pack and asked if anyone has any questions about. No questions were asked.

Amy appreciates the reiteration that the applicants must be prompt. Damonn also mentioned that we see a lack of accountability these days and really appreciates the Chief holding his department accountable the way he does. The Board agreed in both statements.

For the topic of the hiring process: Thomas Taylor motioned to approve the hiring process. Randy Warman seconds the motion. The rest of the Board unanimously agreed.

For the topic of Nicholas Rehmel's promotion: Chief Batalis explained that the Commission has already approved the list. There are no disciplinary or other reason to skip him. The Board understands and have no objections.

Amy asked the Chief what his stance is on vaccinations for the department. Chief replied that we don't force anyone one way or the other. They are also not obligated to tell us if they have or have not received it. If someone tests positive, other firefighters in the station are offered to be tested. Testing is local.

For the topic of voting in a new President: Thomas Taylor nominates Amy Coats. Randy Warman seconds the motion and the Board unanimously agrees.

For the topic of voting in a new Vice President: No nominations were made. Randy Warman motioned to step into the position. Thomas Taylor seconds the motion and the Board unanimously agrees.

Good of the Order Comments: Chief Batalis mentioned that Jessica Taylor no longer resides in Lawrence and has been removed from her position. Jack Querfield has moved out of state to be with family and has also been removed from his position.

The Chief showed his appreciation of the Board. He explains how important the issues and topics are that they face and their dedicated time is important.

Adjournment: Amy Coats solicited a motion to adjourn that was provided by Comm. Taylor, seconded by Comm. Warman and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 18:35 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Kalie Kearney-Dunkerson, Recording Secretary