



City of
LAWRENCE
Indiana

FIRE DEPARTMENT

MERIT COMMISSION MINUTES

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June 02, 2022

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

Commissioners:

Randy Warman	Commissioner
Tom Taylor	Commissioner
Damonn Burns	Commissioner

CLFD:

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

Call to Order: Comm. Burns called the meeting to order at 18:03 hours and led those present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance followed by prayer.

Commission Members Comments: None.

Fire Chief's Comments: None.

Approval of Minutes: Comm. Burns called for a motion to approve the May 05, 2022 meeting minutes. The motion to approve the meeting minutes was provided by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Warman. The motion carried and was approved unanimously.

Old Business: No old business to address.

New Business: Appeals.

Union President Rehmel states that this meeting is important to the individuals appealing because every point counts. Each Firefighter will present the own appeal. Please take into consideration that losing majority of points can be detrimental in the Promotion Process.

Firefighter Williams presents his case. Punishment does not fit the crime by losing points from not writing a number on a line. All critical information is highlighted or bold print with clear instructions. Wording was vague, no clear instructions for totaling points. This is his fourth process, never had this problem before. Fractions of points are important. If arguing other points, put on 'other' line but there was no other line. Was told he could have been eliminated. Little opportunity for growth and improvement. Sometimes lists do not get used. Sometimes mere points decide your

spot. Classes take weeks/months to complete. Took some in other states away from family which shows dedication to department.

Firefighter Williams continues to point out that he could break any SOG and be penalized only 5% but if he's unsure on points, he receives 0 points. He doesn't feel that he should lose any points. Everything is clear in packet except the points section. Lacked clarity. Sacrifices made over 14 years is for nothing? Packet was not in disarray and was not late. Wording was uncertain so the punishment does not fit the crime.

Comm. Taylor asks for clarification on area he did not fill out. Firefighter Williams responded that he was confused about the total of extra points. He wanted the extra points he deserved because he had been passed up previously from a matter of a half of a point.

Comm. Warman asked if there was anything different with this process than ones of the past, which FF Williams stated 'only how much Admin stressed about an organized packet'.

Comm. Burns mentions that the verbiage looks the same and consistent. FF Williams replies that the rest of the packs says *must* but this portion of the packets says *should*. No part of packed should be bolded and it should be more clarified.

Comm. Warman asks if FF Williams would do anything different. FF Williams replies that he would put something in the box or would not have asked for extra points at all.

Firefighter Salinas presents his case. Does not agree with the severity of consequences. Many areas are highlighted with clear instructions on the consequences. This section is not as clear, not highlighted. Also mentioned it would be revised by Merit Commission so he feels that they should decide on points. FF Salinas mentions that he could lose 5 points for violating any SOG and that's less than this mistake.

Comm. Taylor asked him to clarify that he received 0 points. FF Salinas confirms the statement and says he was mostly focused on highlighted areas. Didn't seem like a requirement but this was his first process.

Fire Chief Batalis responds to the appeals. We stated there would be no exceptions. Before the packet was distributed, we put an email out stating to follow instructions and the packet says to put down the number of points. Should they get *some* points? – Yes. Should not get all of their points. If you reward all points, then it's not fair to the people who followed all the instructions. These are important positions and it's imperative to follow directions. Committee would decide how many additional points they get. Will try to clarify further in the future, but they have to take responsibility for not following directions on this part. I would suggest 50-75% of points. It wouldn't be fair to others for them to get 100%. They have valid points for their argument but they should still take ownership.

City Attorney Voller states that she feels the paragraph seemed consistent and wording is ok.

Comm. Taylor asks Chief if the candidates are allowed to ask for help. Chief responds stating they need to just follow the instructions. They can go to another officer or someone on committee if it's a general question. A lot of time and effort goes into these so they should get something as long as it's fair. Also, feels award should go equally to all three appeals. *FF Dullaghan's appeal passed out for the Commission to see. He's out of town and doesn't have to appear.

Captain Lizon is head of the committee and would like to state a few words. Process is competitive but they try to be impartial. Same treatment across the board. They tried to clarify packet as much as possible. They review what ISPI provides but sometimes they may miss things. Cpt. Lizon agrees with Chief Batalis that the punishment does not fit the crime but they have to go by the rules.

Comm. Taylor states that 0 points is unfair. He motions for 75% of points to be awarded. Comm. Warman seconds the motion. The motion was carried and was unanimously approved.

No further questions were asked.

Good of the Order Comments:

Adjournment: Chief Batalis thanks everyone for hearing candidates out. Comm. Burns and Comm. Taylor also thanks candidates for everything they do and for showing up. The meeting adjourned at 19:05 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Kalie Kearney-Dunkerson

Kalie Kearney-Dunkerson, Recording Secretary