

CITY OF LAWRENCE
Police Merit Commission
December 11, 2023
Public Assembly Room
Regular Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Charles Wheeler, Gail Gartin, and Karen Horth Powers

MEMBERS BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: Bob Hendrickson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ronald Christensen

ALSO PRESENT: Clerk Kathleen Walton

STAFF PRESENT: Police Chief Bigsbee, Deputy Chief of Police Woodruff, Deputy Chief of Police Cline, Captain Romeril, Captain Cantrell, Lieutenant Raftery, and several police officers

STAFF BY MICROSOFT TEAMS: None

Commission President Wheeler called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m. and announced a quorum was present.

COMMENTS OF COMMISSION MEMBERS: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Ms. Powers moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on November 13, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gartin. By a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: Deputy Chief of Police Cline requested to certify the top three (3) candidates with the highest scores for Sergeant: Candidate ID #0532, Candidate ID #0366, and Candidate ID #0367 as submitted. Mrs. Gartin moved to certify the candidates with the 3 highest scores for Sergeant. The motion was seconded by Ms. Powers. By a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Deputy Chief of Police Cline recommends the promotion of certified Candidate ID # 0532 (Officer Jason Heiney) to the rank of Sergeant effective February 18, 2024. Ms. Powers moved to promote Officer Jason Heiney to the rank of Sergeant. Mrs. Gartin seconded the motion. By a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Deputy Chief of Police Cline requested the Police Merit Commission to allow Lieutenant Scott Evans to be the acting agent for the 2023-05 hiring process. Mrs. Gartin moved to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Ms. Powers. By a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Deputy Chief of Police Cline filed the results of the written examination with a level 3 CSEM (70%). Thirty-Eight candidates will proceed to the oral interview minimum passing standards. Zero candidates will be removed. Mrs. Gartin moved to set the cut-off at 3 CSEM 70% for the minimum passing standard for the written exam. The motion was seconded by Ms. Powers. By a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

Deputy Chief of Police Cline filed the Oral Interview results of acceptable or outstanding (100-60%) to determine the minimum passing standards. Thirty-One candidates will proceed to the background phase and 7 candidates will be removed. Ms. Powers moved to accept acceptable or outstanding levels in the oral interview with a score of 100-60% for the minimum standard. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gartin. By a roll call vote, the motion carried 4-0.

PERFORMANCE RECOGNITION: The performance recognition focused on the impending departure of City Clerk Kathy Walton. Police Chief Bigsbee read a special commendation recognizing Clerk Walton's support of the Police Merit Commission since it was established in 2007. Additionally, the recognition extended further back to 2004 when Clerk Walton first took office and even further back because of her support over a total span of some 27 years. Police Chief Bigsbee made special note of the fact that Clerk Walton is a two-time graduate of the Lawrence Police Citizen's Academy. A complete copy of the certificate of recognition is attached.

Commission President Wheeler spoke of Clerk Walton's many years of valuable service and efforts during the establishment of the Commission and the performance of responsibilities during the years since. He emphasized that, when he became president discussions with previous presidents advised him to consult with Clerk Walton about the functioning of the commission. That was excellent advice.

COMMENTS OF THE POLICE CHIEF: Police Chief Bigsbee thanked Deputy Chief of Police Woodruff for his many years of service to the citizens of the City of Lawrence.

Speaking for the membership, FOP President Lieutenant Raftery added his thanks to Clerk Walton for all her support for union members and the organization. He noted particularly that when a vacancy occurred on the merit commission, she would visit each shift during the day and in the evening to ensure that each officer had the opportunity to vote. This effort required Clerk Walton to make multiple visits to each shift and then make sure the ballot box was available for general membership meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m., by the unanimous vote of the Commission.

Charles Wheeler, President

Kathleen Walton, City Clerk

These minutes are not intended to be verbatim. They are a summary of discussions held, except for the motions. An audiotape is made which provides a detailed record.