

*Sycamore Fire and Police Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes*

*August 30, 2010*

**ROLL CALL**

Chairman Petersen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Present at the meeting were: Commissioner Samantha Dailey, Commissioner Teresa Jacobson, Fire Chief Mark Kessler, Police Lt. Darrell Johnson, and City Attorney Kevin Buick.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion**

Commissioner Jacobson moved to approve the agenda, as written, and Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Motion**

Commissioner Dailey moved to approve the minutes from the August 4, 2010 special meeting, as written, and Commissioner Jacobson seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All of the Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 – 0.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no communications.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Status on Establishing a new Entry-level Firefighter/Paramedic Eligibility List**

Chairman Petersen reported that the testing process was completed, with a final eligibility list established and ready to be mailed to the candidates. Recording Secretary Tritle said that a question regarding preference points for attending an approved Fire Academy came up from two candidates. One had received his Firefighter II certificate on-line, while another had received his by attending classes at a community college; both were denied the preference points for attending an approved Academy. Chief Kessler explained that the candidates who receive their Firefighter II certification from a Fire Academy have more live, hands-on training than those who attain their certification through other means. He pointed out that the IAFF Labor Agreement specifically states that Firefighters hired by the City of Sycamore who receive their Firefighter II certification through means other than a recognized Academy must still be sent to the Academy, at the City's expense. Chief Kessler asked that, before the next testing process, the Rules and Regulations be amended to specifically define an approved Academy and to stipulate that the Firefighter II certification must be attained through an approved Academy. City Attorney Buick recommended that a list of recognized Academies be maintained by the Commission.

**Motion**

Commissioner Jacobson moved to approve the Final Eligibility List of entry-level Firefighters and Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All of the Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 – 0.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Approval Of The Bills**

Chairman Petersen reported that nine invoices totaling \$2,102.49 were received:

- \$931.00 from I/O Solutions to administer the written exam for entry-level Firefighter/Paramedics
- \$544.00 from Shaw Media to advertise the entry-level Firefighter/Paramedic testing process
- \$20.50 from Kishwaukee Corporate Health for a Firefighter candidate's hearing and TB tests
- \$15.00 from Kishwaukee Corporate Health for a Police Officer candidate's TB test
- \$53.61 from Psychemedics for a Police Officer candidate's drug test
- \$500.00 from Braden Counseling for a Police Officer candidate's psychological screening (two invoices)
- \$38.38 from Momark for office supplies (two invoices)

#### **Motion**

Commissioner Dailey moved to approve the payment of invoices totaling \$2,102.49 and Commissioner Jacobson seconded the motion.

#### **Vote**

All of the Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 – 0.

### **B. Discussion on Amending the Rules and Regulations to Allow for Establishing a Separate List of Certified Police Officer Candidates**

City Attorney Kevin Buick informed the Commission that Chief Thomas was interested in establishing a list of Certified Police Officer Candidates, which would be kept separately from the Entry-level Eligibility list. Mr. Buick explained State statutes allow for a second register of certified officers (or lateral hires) to be established; however, the Sycamore Rules and Regulations would need to be amended in order to create this list. When two lists are in place and a job opening occurs, the Board has absolute discretion to either choose the next candidate on the Entry-level Eligibility List or to hire the next candidate on the Lateral Hire List.

State statutes specify that candidates for the Lateral Hire List have at least two years of experience working as a Police Officer. Mr. Buick said that Chief Thomas would like the candidates to also have been employed as a Police Officer within the past 12 months. Mr. Buick also explained that orientation and the written exam are waived for Lateral Hire candidates and preference points are not factored into their score; candidates are ranked based solely on their oral exam score. In the case of a tie in the scores, the candidates would be re-interviewed. Recording Secretary Tritle reminded the Commissioners of a past conversation about possibly waiving the education requirement for Lateral Hires; Mr. Buick said that the Appendix to the Rules and Regulations would need to be modified if the Commissioners choose to waive this requirement. Certified candidates would still be required to undergo a polygraph, post-offer psychological and medical exams and a final oral interview with the Commission, if needed.

Chairman Petersen asked if the Lateral Hire List is good for two years, as is the Entry-level List. Mr. Buick confirmed that this list is good for two years, per State statute. Commissioner Dailey asked if a person could be on both lists. Mr. Buick answered that a candidate could participate in both processes.

Chairman Petersen asked if the Lateral Hire candidates could be pre-screened by the Police Department. Mr. Buick answered that pre-screening is not an option as it is very subjective. According to State statute, an oral exam is required to be given and it must be based upon objective criteria; it should also be administered by at least one Commissioner, which would preclude a pre-screening process. To avoid interviewing a large number of candidates and to also avoid the establishment of a second tier of candidates such as has happened in the past, Mr. Buick suggested that the Commissioners create several interview panels to use for the oral exams, with standardization being the key. Chief Kessler asked if the Commissioners could cap the number of applications that it accepts; Mr. Buick answered that this cannot be done, though the Commission does have the authority to cap the length of time in which applications will be accepted.

Besides making the previously discussed changes, Mr. Buick also recommended that Section 2 of Chapter I in the Sycamore Rules and Regulations be amended to include a definition of the "Register of Certified Officers for Lateral Entry".

**Motion**

Commissioner Dailey moved to amend Chapter V of the Rules and Regulations to create a new Section 1.5, "Establishment of a Register of Certified Police Officers for Lateral Entry"; to modify Chapter I, Section 2 to add a definition for "Register of Certified Police Officers for Lateral Entry"; and to amend the Appendix to create a new listing of minimum qualifications for Certified Officers. Commissioner Jacobson seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All of the Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 – 0.

**Motion**

Commissioner Jacobson moved to approve the establishment of a separate eligibility list of Certified Police Officer Candidates and Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All of the Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 – 0.

Mr. Buick stated that the amended Rules and Regulations cannot go into effect until at least 10 days after the date a notice of the amendment is published. However, it would be appropriate to advertise for candidates, though a list cannot be established until the amendment is effective.

**C. Discussion on Other Potential Changes to the Rules and Regulations**

Chairman Petersen asked Mr. Buick if the Rules and Regulations could be amended to change the passing scores for the written and oral exams in order to control the number of oral interviews that would need to be given. Mr. Buick reported that he had conducted a survey and found that a minimum passing score of 70% was the norm amongst the municipalities he contacted, as was the 60/40 written to oral components of the preliminary score. He urged the Commissioners to explore other ways of spreading their testing duties out, such as outsourcing the process or using multiple oral interview panels. Whatever process is chosen, the Commissioners need to create an objective testing process that will not be challenged.

Chief Kessler repeated his request to amend the Rules and Regulations before the next Firefighter testing process to establish to require that applicants be certified as a Firefighter II and Paramedic at time of application. However, he said that he would need to speak to the union about this before the Commissioners act on it.

