

*Sycamore Fire and Police Commission  
Minutes*

*May 3, 2006*

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 a.m. In attendance were Chairman Richard Ubl, Commissioner Samantha Dailey, Commissioner Andrew Larson, Newly Sworn Commissioner Ronald Short, Police Chief Don Thomas, Fire Chief Bill Riddle, Assistant Fire Chief Mark Kessler, and City Attorney Keith Foster.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion**

A motion to approve the agenda, as written, was made by Commissioner Larson and was seconded by Commissioner Dailey.

**Vote**

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Motion**

A motion to approve the minutes from the open session of the April 6, 2006 meeting, as written, was made by Commissioner Dailey and was seconded by Commissioner Larson.

**Vote**

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

**Motion**

A motion to approve the minutes from the closed session of the April 6, 2006 meeting, as written, was made by Commissioner Dailey and was seconded by Commissioner Larson.

**Vote**

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

## ELECTION OF OFFICERS

### Motion

A motion to elect Commissioner Dailey as the Chairman of the Sycamore Fire and Police Commission for the period of May 1, 2006 – April 30, 2007 was made by Commissioner Larson and was seconded by Commissioner Short.

### Vote

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

### Motion

A motion to elect Commissioner Short as the Secretary of the Fire and Police Commission was made by Chairman Dailey and was seconded by Commissioner Larson.

### Vote

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

## COMMUNICATIONS

- **Letter from City Manager Nicklas concerning the promotion of a Police Officer to the Position of Sergeant and the Hiring of a Replacement Police Officer**

Chairman Dailey read the letter from City Manager Nicklas, which stated that Sgt. Scott Mayeda had received an offer of employment to be the new Police Chief in the town of Virden, Illinois. Contingent on Sgt. Mayeda's acceptance of this job, City Manger Nicklas received approval from the City Council to appoint Sharon Anderson, the next candidate on the promotional list, to the position of Sergeant to replace Sgt. Mayeda and to hire a replacement Police officer to take the place of Officer Anderson.

Chief Thomas reported that, since City Manger Nicklas had written his letter to the Commission, Sgt. Mayeda has accepted the job and submitted his written resignation; he will retire from the City of Sycamore effective May 17, 2006. He explained that the City Council will meet again on May 15<sup>th</sup>, and he would like Officer Anderson to be sworn in at that meeting.

### Motion

A motion to promote Police Officer Sharon Anderson to the position of Police Sergeant effective May 15, 2006 was made by Commissioner Larson and was seconded by Commissioner Short.

### Vote

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

**Motion**

A motion to send a tentative letter of employment to the next candidate on the Police Eligibility List, subject to the candidate passing the polygraph, medical, background, and psychological exams, was made by Commissioner Larson and was seconded by Commissioner Short.

**Vote**

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

Chief Thomas stated that the next candidate on the list is Corinne Calame. He said that he had spoken to her and she indicated she was still interested in working for the Sycamore Police Department.

Commissioner Short asked if the Commissioners should vote to accept Sgt. Mayeda's resignation. City Attorney Foster answered that this would be a good thing to do.

**Motion**

A motion to accept the resignation submitted by Sgt. Mayeda effective on May 17, 2006 was made by Commissioner Short and was seconded by Commissioner Larson.

**Vote**

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

- **Letter from Police Chief Thomas concerning the end of the Probationary Period for Police Officer Ryan Goodman**

Chairman Dailey reported that the Commission had received a letter from Chief Thomas in which he announced that Police Officer Ryan Goodman completed all the necessary requirements of his probationary period on March 25, 2006.

**Motion**

A motion to send Police Officer Goodman a letter to confirm the end of his probationary period and to acknowledge that he is officially a fully certified Sycamore Police Officer was made by Commissioner Larson and was seconded by Commissioner Short.

**Vote**

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

- **Letter from Fire Chief Riddle concerning the end of the Probationary Period for Firefighter John Pink**

Chairman Dailey reported that the Commission had received a letter from Chief Riddle in which he announced that Firefighter John Pink would complete all the necessary requirements of his probationary period on May 13, 2006.

**Motion**

A motion to send Firefighter Pink a letter to confirm the end of his probationary period was made by Commissioner Larson and was seconded by Commissioner Short.

**Vote**

Ayes: 3  
 Nays: 0  
 Abstain: 0

- **E-mail correspondences between the Commissioners outside of scheduled meetings**

Chairman Dailey requested that, when issues arise between meetings of the Commission, she would prefer that the issue be put on the agenda to be discussed at the next meeting, rather than passed back and forth between the Commissioners via e-mail. The other Commissioners agreed. City Attorney Foster explained that it is acceptable to communicate about an issue via e-mail; however, the Commissioner may not make any decision about the issue outside of a formal meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS**

- **Follow-up discussion on the process of hiring POC Interns as Full-time Firefighters**

Based upon the discussions about this issue from prior meetings of the Commission, Chief Riddle explained that he had put together a Resolution for the Commissioners to review. The Resolution would allow the following changes to the Firefighter testing procedure:

1. The age at which an applicant can take the entry-level exam would be changed to age 20.
2. POC Firefighters employed by the City of Sycamore would receive three (3) additional points for each year of service to the City, with a maximum of nine (9) points allowed.
3. Candidates who complete an approved Fire Academy would earn five (5) additional points.

Recording Secretary Tritle asked if this means that a POC Intern in the Sycamore Fire Department would be eligible to receive a maximum of fourteen (14) additional points, over and above what they could receive for education and military service. Chief Riddle answered that this is correct; if a POC Intern qualified for all possible points, he or she could receive an additional nineteen (19) points total. He added that this is legal and besides helping them to retain these employees, it would also help them to recapture some of the resources the Department expends on their training. Commissioner Larson

asked if these points are added after they take and pass the written exam. Chief Riddle answered that this was correct, adding that they would also have to pass the medical, psychological, and background exams in order to be hired. Commissioner Short observed that, while the Resolution states that the POC Interns will earn three (3) points for each year of service, it does not state a maximum amount that can be earned. City Attorney Foster said that this would definitely need to be added to the Resolution. Commissioner Short asked how the other five (5) points were earned. Chief Riddle answered that a candidate is eligible to receive five (5) additional points if they have an Associates Degree or have military service. Recording Secretary Tritle asked if the POC Interns would have to apply for these preference points, as candidates must now do if they are eligible for education or military preference points. Chief Riddle answered that this was correct. Commissioner Short asked if a candidate earns education preference points if they have an Associates Degree or 60 college credit hours. Recording Secretary Tritle answered that the 60 credit hours only applies to Police Officer candidates. Chief Riddle added that the Commissioners could choose to apply this to Firefighter candidates as well. Commissioner Short explained that he brought this up because many students do not obtain an Associates Degree; they accumulate hours to transfer and apply to a Bachelors Degree. Chief Thomas explained that this did cause a problem for the Police Department the last time they tested for entry-level candidates; the law stipulates that they would not receive points unless they have an Associates Degree. However, they had many candidates apply who did have 60 or more hours of college credit hours, but did not have an Associates Degree; these candidates were not eligible for the additional preference points for education. He added that he would like to address this problem in the future. Chief Riddle observed that this would be a motivation for candidates to get their Associates Degree. Commissioner Short answered that there are fewer students today who are earning an Associates Degree.

Chairman Dailey asked if the proposed Resolution would give the POC Interns the advantage that the Fire Department is looking for in the hiring process. Chief Riddle answered that it does, adding that, while it does give the POC Interns an advantage, it does not close the process to outside candidates.

Commissioner Short asked for clarification on how preference points are awarded for education or military service. Recording Secretary Tritle answered that a candidate can receive an additional five (5) points for education or military service. However, if they have both, the most that they can be awarded is five (5) additional points.

Commissioner Larson asked if Chief Riddle was asking for a motion on this Resolution today. City Attorney Foster answered that the Resolution needed to be “cleaned up”, but the Commissioners could vote on it now, subject to the revisions that were proposed in today’s discussion.

## **Motion**

A motion to approve the changes to Section 7 of the Rules and Regulations, subject to the revisions discussed at today’s meeting was made by Commissioner Larson and was seconded by Commissioner Short.

## Vote

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

City Attorney Foster said that he would revise the language in the Resolution and send it to Recording Secretary Tritle so that she can get it to the Commissioners for their signatures. After the Resolution is signed, Recording Secretary Tritle must place the Notice of the Change to the Rules and Regulations in the newspaper. Chairman Dailey asked if the change would apply to the testing for entry-level Firefighters that will occur this summer. City Attorney Foster answered that it would.

Commissioner Larson asked if the Police Department has an internship program in their Department similar to the one in the Fire Department. Chief Thomas answered that they do not, adding that the program in the Fire Department is visionary and very unique; he was not sure how it could be done in the Police Department.

## NEW BUSINESS

- **Recognition of Robert Rosenberg, who is retiring on May 1, 2006 after 25 years of service as a Police Officer**

Chairman Dailey asked what the Commissioners usually do in this case. Recording Secretary Tritle answered that, in the past, the Commissioners have sent a retiring Police Officer or Firefighter a letter to thank them for their years of service to the City. She added that Officer Rosenberg had submitted his letter of resignation about four (4) months earlier, and wondered if the Commissioners needed to vote to accept it. City Attorney Foster answered that Officer Rosenberg is really resigning from the City's employment; therefore, a motion to accept his resignation is not needed. Chief Thomas added that the City Council authorized the Commissioners to hire Officer Rosenberg's replacement several months ago as well; Officer Rudi Ziegler was recently hired for this reason. Recording Secretary Tritle explained that the letter would just be a courtesy from the Commission.

- **Establishment of the schedule for the Regular Meetings of the Fire and Police Commission in FY07**

Recording Secretary Tritle asked the Commissioners if, due to the e-mail question posed earlier, they would prefer to continue meeting on a quarterly basis, or if they would like to meet more often than that. She explained that, in the past, the Commissioners did not have a set meeting schedule; they would just call meetings as issues arose. City Attorney Foster answered that it is probably smart to have a set schedule; however, a meeting can be called if an issue arises between regular meetings, since the Chairman has the right to call a special meeting. Chairman Dailey agreed, adding that the date for a regular meeting can also be changed if need be. City Attorney Foster stated that it is perfectly fine to e-mail the Commissioners about revising the meeting schedule. Chairman Dailey asked the Commissioners if they thought it would be best to stick to a quarterly meeting schedule, or change it to every-other-month. Commissioner Larson answered that he would prefer to stick to the quarterly schedule and to call special meetings if issues arise between these regular meetings. Commissioner Short agreed. Chief Thomas added that

he thought quarterly meetings were enough, since the Commissioners never know when special issues, such as resignations or disciplinary problems, will arise anyway. Chairman Dailey stated that the Commissioners would stick to the quarterly schedule. Commissioner Short pointed out that the Commissioners should meet in June, though, as they will need to determine the entry-level testing schedule for Firefighter candidates.

The Commissioners set the following schedule for their regular meetings, to occur at 11:00 a.m. on each date:

June 1, 2006  
August 7, 2006  
November 13, 2006  
First Monday in February  
First Monday in April

Chief Thomas stated that, if the hiring process goes smoothly, he would like the Commissioners to interview and approve the candidate who will be hired to replace Officer Anderson at the June meeting, so that the candidate will be able to give two weeks notice to her employer and be ready to go the Academy on June 16<sup>th</sup>. He added that, if they miss this window, the next Academy would not start for another six months. Chairman Dailey answered that she did not think this would be a problem and asked Chief Thomas on what date he would like the new Officer to start. He answered that he would like her to be hired a few days prior to June 16<sup>th</sup>, so that she can go through her orientation before she leaves for the Academy. Recording Secretary Tritle answered that she will schedule the candidate's final interview to take place prior to the start of the meeting on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Chief Thomas stated that the Commissioners do not really need to re-interview the candidate. They could, instead, make a decision today that, if the candidate passes the background check and psychological and medical exams, Recording Secretary Tritle would be authorized to send her the final hire letter. Recording Secretary Tritle answered that she thought the Rules and Regulations state that a final interview is necessary. City Attorney Foster answered that the Commissioners do have the right to waive a final interview, adding that the final interview is not for the benefit of the candidate but rather for the Commission's own protection. Recording Secretary explained that, in the past, the Commissioners conducted a final interview to clarify any information that may come up in the candidate's background check or psychological examination. Chief Thomas answered that, if there are issues with a psychological exam, the Commissioners would probably choose not to hire this candidate anyway and could just meet to make that decision. Recording Secretary Tritle asked if the Commissioners could pick and choose whom they wished to interview, or if it was necessary to interview every candidate. Commissioner Short observed that, whichever way the Commissioners choose to go, they should be consistent. City Attorney Foster agreed, adding that they needed to be fair to all of the candidates. Chairman Dailey stated that she thought they should just continue to conduct a final interview. The other Commissioners agreed.

### **Motion**

A motion to approve the schedule of Regular Meetings of the Commission was made by Commissioner Short and was seconded by Commissioner Larson.

## **Vote**

Ayes: 3  
Nays: 0  
Abstain: 0

- **Discussion on a Supplemental Psychological Exam Report that can be used for the training and Development of new Police Officers**

Chief Thomas explained that he had previously asked the Commissioners to consider this based upon the recommendation of the psychologist that we use to perform this exam. The psychologist traditionally has met with Chief Thomas after he completes the examination of a candidate to debrief him about the outcome of the exam. In this way, the Chief has a heads-up as to whether or not the Commissioners will be likely to proceed with the hiring of this candidate. Chief Thomas explained that, in this meeting, the psychologist also reveals specific traits about a candidate, such as his or her reading or cognitive abilities or personality traits that the Department could use for training purposes. He added that he knows of other Departments who receive these types of reports after the psychological exam has been completed. This is why he suggested that we also do this. He explained that the psychologist is willing to give the Department a “sanitized” report, absent personal issues, that the Training Officers could use when working with a new Police Officer. We would be charged an additional \$250 for this report, which would be paid out of the Police Department budget, not the Commission’s. Chief Thomas said that he had read the minutes from the last meeting of the Commission, in which the Commissioners concerns about this issue were discussed. Therefore, he is withdrawing his request and will continue to get his information about a candidate’s abilities through his debriefing with the psychologist, as well as through feedback he receives from the trainers at the Police Academy. Commissioner Dailey answered that this was certainly the Chief’s choice, adding that she can understand the need for this type of information if it provides valuable input for future training. However, if the report deals with personality traits, these could be based upon the examiner’s opinion and may not necessarily be accurate in the long run. Chief Thomas said that some Police Departments used to give the results of the psychological exam directly to the Training Officers, which he felt was a mistake, as a person could end up being labeled, and this could stick with the Officer throughout his or her career.

- **Fire Chief**

Chief Riddle introduced new Assistant Fire Chief Mark Kessler to the Commissioners. Assistant Chief Kessler previously held the positions of Fire Lieutenant and Training Officer. He has been with the Fire Department for 22 years. He explained that the current Assistant Chief, Cary Niewold, would be retiring on July 1, 2006. Since Assistant Chief Niewold has been with the Department for 30 years, he has accumulated a large amount of vacation time, which he will be taking prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>. Commissioner Larson asked if the subsequent promotion and new hiring had taken place. Chief Riddle answered that the next Firefighter on the promotions list had been sworn in to replace Assistant Chief Kessler. He added that they have chosen to wait on the new hire, as barring any new injuries or retirements, their current roster can support each shift. Chairman Dailey asked Chief Riddle if he knew of any other retirements that may be coming up. He answered that he did not know of any that would be occurring between now and the fall.

- **Police Chief**

Chief Thomas had no other business to report.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Chairman Dailey reported that there were no personnel issues that required the Commissioners to go into a closed session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion**

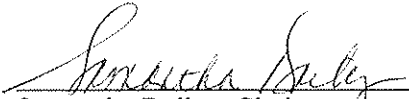
A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Larson and was seconded by Commissioner Short.

**Vote**

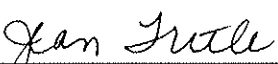
Ayes:	3
Nays:	0
Abstain:	0

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Minutes accepted by:

  
Samantha Dailey, Chairman 6.1.06  
Date

Attest:

  
Jean Tritle, Recording Secretary 6/1/06  
Date