

*Sycamore Fire and Police Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes*

August 29, 2011

ROLL CALL

Chairman Petersen called the meeting to order at 1:18 p.m. Present at the meeting were: Commissioner Samantha Dailey, Commissioner Teresa Jacobson, Fire Chief Mark Kessler, Police Chief Don Thomas, and City Attorney Kevin Buick.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Commissioner Jacobson moved to amend the agenda to include a discussion about establishing a promotional testing schedule. 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 open session of the regular Commission meeting on May 9, 2011 as written, and Commissioner Jacobson seconded the motion.

Vote

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

APPROVAL OF BILLS RECEIVED

Chairman Petersen read off the billings:

- Blue Line for \$298 for Police Officer testing ad/posting.
- I/O Solutions for \$1,897.56 for Police Officer Entry-Level test and administering test on June 11, 2011.
- Shaw Suburban Media for \$525.50 for Police Officer Entry Level test advertisement
- Second billing for Shaw Suburban Media for \$39.10 for Changes to the Police and Fire Commission Rules and Regulations.

Motion

Commissioner Jacobson moved to approve the billings received since the last regular meeting on May 9, 2011. Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion.

Vote

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1) Discussion was held regarding the Oral Interview examination schedule for Fire Lieutenant on September 19th, and Police Sergeant on September 28 and 29, 2011. The Written Test for both positions will be administered by I/O Solutions on October 12th and 11:00, in the Police Department EOC/Training Room.

The lists of points thus far (Seniority and Merit) were distributed, and the time and room schedule to hold the remaining tests was discussed, and decided. If any individual is unable to make the schedule as currently arranged, the individual needs to arrange a switch with another candidate and notify Human Resources of the agreed changes. Human Resources Director Sue Willey distributed questions used in the past to verify if the Board would want to use the same list, or prepare new ones. The same packet will be used that they used in 2008. Ms. Willey will prepare the final schedule and interview packets/questions for the Board members, and distribute to them one week prior to the interview date. Both the Board and IAFF have arranged for their own observer to be present at the Fire Lieutenant interviews. IAFF will also have an observed present for the Fire Lieutenant written examination.

The Fire Lieutenant interviews will be held in the Sycamore Center, 2nd Conference Room. The Police Sergeant interviews will be held at the Police Department, 2nd floor Conference room. Chairman Petersen discussed his concern of holding interviews at the police station and having the candidates walk out in to the area where they may encounter another candidate/officer and discuss the questions since they are fresh on their mind, where if they were held at the Sycamore Center, they are more likely to go home in between and may not discuss with others, or at least would not have as fresh of a recollection of the questions to tell another candidate. Chief Thomas explained that he had no concerns with it, and in fact was certain that officers would not do that as it would help another candidate out, aiding them to possibly score higher than themselves. Commissioner Jacobson agreed, that it would only hurt themselves to discuss with others.

Human Resources Director Sue Willey will be sure to get the postings out in a timely manner, giving the time schedule and room locations.

- 2) The Entry Level Police Officer Final Eligibility Lists were distributed and discussed. For the Certified Officer Eligibility list, there is only one candidate that successfully passed the testing process and made the final list. For the Police Officer Entry Level Final Eligibility List, there were 19 successful candidates. It will be the choice of the Board as to which list they would use when the next vacancy becomes available, and an offer is to be made to a candidate.

Chief Thomas asked if the way that the recent interviews were held seemed to be sufficient (the Chairman with one other Commissioner and two police officers). Chairman Petersen stated it did work very well - since there was a different Commissioner on some days, having the two police officers served as the "constant" for all interviews. This way, two-thirds (2/3) of the scoring was done through the consistency of the two police officers. Chief Thomas added that at larger departments, they even rotate the entire team on different days, so we were more consistent that by having the same two police officers served on each interview.

Motion

Commissioner Dailey moved to approve the September 1, 2011 posting of the lists for Certified Police Officer Final Eligibility List with the effective date of November 1, 2011, as well as the Police Officer Entry Level Police Eligibility which also has an effective date of November 2, 1011. Commissioner Jacobson seconded the motion.

Vote

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

Chairman Petersen asked if there were any anticipated vacancies coming up, and Chief Thomas stated none that he has been made officially aware of.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of the new Firefighter Hiring Law was started by Attorney Kevin Buick. He stated that as a home-rule community, Sycamore is still bound by some statutory provisions that prescribed certain parameters for guidance as to what our Rules and Regulations must contain, but we have a wider degree of latitude in dealing with some of the laws. In the case of this new Firefighter Hiring Law pertaining to the hiring of full-time firefighters, the State has included specific language that this is a limitation on home-rule authority. Therefore, all home-rule authority in municipalities will be bound by these new changes, making it necessary for Sycamore's Rules and Regulations to be at least as stringent as what is prescribed by the State. As this is a major re-write of the law and requires major changes to our Rules and Regulations, it warrants more time and research into the matter before we even begin rewriting them. Even though this is take effect immediately, any existing lists with an expiration date prior to August 1, 2013 are grandfathered. So our next testing Fire Entry Level Testing process will require us to have the language changes in place.

Attorney Buick distributed a copy of the law, and there was some discussion as to the pros and cons, i.e. standardized physical testing state-wide, and having one list for all departments in the state to draw from for hiring, and the proposed scoring method.

Chief Kessler asked if we are given the option of maintain our own local list only, or do we have to go through the state-wide list for hiring. Attorney Buick stated that his current understanding is that if we opt for the state-wide pool, we would have to change all of our current rules and totally remove all of our current regulations and procedures for hiring firefighters, that it is "one way or the other" that we can't mix them. He went on to say that even electing to maintain a local list and opt out of the state-wide pool will require major restructuring of the Rules and Regulations as they stand today. Chief Thomas asked about how the state-wide list would come in to play with our requirements of Firefighter II and Paramedic, since not all agencies across the state have the same requirements. Attorney Buick stated that he believes the Commission would have the ability to sort out those that meet our individual agency requirement, and go by the points ranking of only those individuals for our hiring purposes. He also believes the local commission will still have the ability to interview candidates, but that there are many provisional changes to be made.

Chief Kessler stated that his understanding is that new firefighters will no longer be under a probationary status, they will be considered in an "apprenticeship" with the fire department. Attorney Buick reiterated that this is a major deviation from our current process and procedures, and we will have to sort through everything and make some major decisions.

The decision was made to take the next couple of months to gather as much information as we can, and see how other communities implement these changes and see if any revisions are forthcoming prior to making language changes to the Sycamore Fire and Police Rules and Regulations. This discussion will continue at the December board meeting with an outline of recommendation from Attorney Buick. We will continue to discuss and make decisions at the March meeting, or even call a special meeting(s) if necessary.

B. Fire Chief

Fire Lieutenant Tom Pritchett recently filed for disability pension, and we are waiting on the outcome of that decision before making a promotion. He will keep the Board informed as it progresses.

C. Police Chief

Probationary officers are doing very well. One recently had an accident for which minor discipline is pending, and he wanted to notify the board that the FOP contract gives the officers the option of appealing to the Board for any disciplinary action. This has not typically been utilized in the past, but he wanted to make the Board aware that it is a possible option.

CLOSED SESSION

No closed session was needed.

ADJOURNMENT

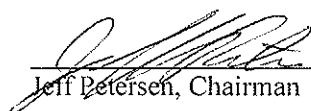
Motion

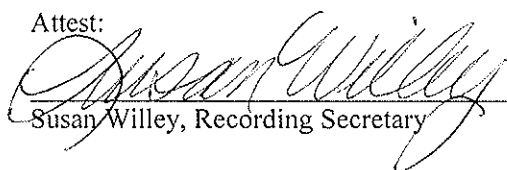
Commissioner Dailey moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:30 p.m. and Commissioner Jacobson seconded the motion.

Vote

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

Accepted by:

 _____ 12-3-11
Jeff Petersen, Chairman Date

Attest:
 _____ 12/5/11
Susan Willey, Recording Secretary Date