

*Sycamore Fire and Police Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes*

July 9, 2007

ROLL CALL

Chairman Petersen called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Present at the meeting were: Commissioner Ron Short, Commissioner Samantha Dailey, Fire Chief Bill Riddle, Police Chief Don Thomas, and City Attorney Keith Foster.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion

Commissioner Short moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion.

Vote

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Open Session

Motion

Commissioner Dailey moved to approve the minutes from the May 25, 2007 meeting, as written, and Commissioner Short seconded the motion.

Vote

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

COMMUNICATIONS

A. Approval of Bills

Chairman Petersen reported that the Commission had received the following bills, totaling \$1,675.36:

\$27.40 – Corporate Express for a case of copy paper
\$264.96 – Daily Chronicle for Police Officer Testing Notice
\$298.00 – The Blue Line for Police Officer Testing Notice
\$110.00 – Govtjobs.com for Police Officer Testing Notice
\$975.00 – I/o Solutions for three psychological exams for Fire and Police candidates

Motion

Commissioner Short moved to approve the payment of the bill totaling \$1,675.36 and Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion.

Vote

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

B. FOIA Request

Chairman Petersen reported that the Commissioners had received a request under the Freedom of Information Act from a *Daily Chronicle* reporter who wanted a copy of the transcript from the Larmon hearing. City Attorney Foster explained the reporter was informed that the Commission did not have a written copy of the transcript and, therefore, he was given a copy of the complaint and the findings of the Commission. City Attorney Foster added that he has not received any follow-up inquiries about this matter.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Follow-up Discussion on the Testing Process to Establish a New Entry-level Police Officer Eligibility List

Chairman Petersen reported that he and Chief Thomas had spoken with I/O Solutions concerning their application process and that both of them were dissatisfied with the level of customer service that I/O Solutions appears to provide. Chief Thomas explained that the staff at I/O Solutions indicated it is their policy not to respond to candidates' inquiries as to whether or not their application packet had been received; also, they do not give candidates who hand-deliver their packets a receipt. I/O Solutions indicated they will not inform candidates if their application packet is incomplete until after the application deadline has passed, which would automatically disqualify them. Chief Thomas did not feel it would be fair to disqualify a candidate due to clerical errors that could arise on the part of I/O Solutions. Therefore, it was decided that the application process would remain in-house, with I/O Solutions administering the written and psychological examinations.

Chief Thomas asked the Commissioners to consider waiving the \$25 application fee for candidates who are on the current eligibility list who will reapply and go through the testing process again. Commissioner Dailey asked if there would be any legal issues to consider if they did this. City Attorney Foster that there were none. Commissioner Dailey asked if they would need to do this every time a test was given. Chief Thomas answered that it would be something that they would need to address at the time each test is administered, as the Commissioners could choose again not to charge any application fees in the future.

Motion

Commissioner Short moved to waive the \$25 application fee this one time for candidates who are on the current eligibility list and will reapply to take the exam again this summer. Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion.

Vote

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

Recording Secretary Tritle reported that she had received several calls from certified candidates over the age of 35 who wished to take the test. Several of them were not currently working as Police Officers. Ms. Tritle wanted to know if the age restriction applied under these circumstances. Chief Thomas answered that Police Officers who receive Illinois certification by attending the Police Academy are trained for life. If they leave employment as a Police Officer for any period of time and are rehired as a Police Officer at a later date, they need to attend a 40 hour review class as well as firearms training in order to be recertified. Chief Thomas also explained that Illinois has reciprocity agreements with some states (e.g. Wisconsin) in which certified Police Officers from those states need only take the 40 hour class and firearms training; if there is no agreement, certified candidates from other states would need to attend the Academy. He suggested that candidates with questions such as these call the Illinois Training and Standards Board to obtain the answer. The Commissioners all agreed with this suggestion. Ms. Tritle said she is also receiving calls from candidates who are asking if the Board would waive the 60 college credit hour requirement if they have military service. The Commissioners verified that their Rules and Regs do not allow the educational requirement to be waived under any circumstances.

Concerning passing scores, Chairman Petersen stated I/O Solutions recommends that the Commissioners require a passing score of 70%, which is the score that the Sycamore Board currently uses. He proposed that the Commissioners consider changing the passing score to 75%. Commissioner Short stated that he would prefer to leave the passing grade score at 70% and to administer the oral interview to a larger number of candidates. Commissioner Dailey concurred. Commissioner Petersen stated that I/O Solutions recommends administering the oral examination only to the top 25 – 30 candidates. Chief Thomas stated that he would like at least 25 candidates to be interviewed. Commissioner Short suggested that the Commissioners determine the number of candidates to interview after the written exam scores are received. Commissioner Dailey asked if the number interviewed can vary from test to test. City Attorney Foster said that it can. Commissioner Dailey concurred with Commissioner Short that the passing score remain at 70% and that the candidates be told at orientation that the number of them who will be interviewed will be determined once the written exam scores are received.

Recording Secretary Tritle asked if the oral examinations will be conducted as they have been in the past, with the Commissioners, 2 representatives from the Department, and the Human Resources Director participating in the process. The Commissioners all concurred that the process would remain the same.

Chairman Petersen asked the Chiefs if they agreed with having the written exam count for 60% of the total score and the oral exam for 40%. Chief Thomas stated that, for simplicity, he would like it to be a 50/50 calculation. Chief Riddle answered that he preferred the 60/40 calculation, since the subjective exam counts for more than the objective exam, which could help to avoid charges of impropriety. Commissioner Dailey suggested leaving the grading at 60/40; the other Commissioners concurred.

B. Update on the Review of the Rules and Regulations of the Sycamore Commission

City Attorney Foster handed out a preliminary version of the Sycamore Rules and Regulations that had been compiled by Kevin Buick. He explained that Mr. Buick had previously sent a copy of them to the Chiefs and Ms. Tritle. Ms. Tritle noted that the issues of preference points and the Fire Promotions procedures were not spelled out in Mr. Buick's version. She recommended that they Commissioners organize a workshop to work on the updated version of the Rules and Regs. City Attorney Foster suggested that the Chiefs, Ms. Tritle, and Mr. Buick meet to identify the information that is missing so that the updated version can be finalized. Everyone concurred.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Fire Chief

Chief Riddle reported that he had no new business to discuss with the Commissioners.

B. Police Chief

Chief Thomas explained to the Commissioners that, depending on budgetary constraints, he may choose not to hire another Police Officer in August, as was originally planned.

