



**BOARD OF FIRE AND
POLICE COMMISSIONERS
Thursday, April 15, 2021, at 9:00 am
Meeting Minutes**

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

The City of Carbondale Board of Fire and Police Commissioners held a meeting on Thursday, April 15, 2021, virtually through Zoom. Chairperson Kerry Braswell called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Roll Call

Present: Kerry Braswell, Randy Burnside (9:20 a.m.), Linda Flowers, Stephanie Jerstad, and Ted Lomax

Absent: None

Acknowledgement of Guests

Also present were Deputy City Clerk Clinette Hayes, Human Resources Manager Tara Brown, Diversity and Compliance Officer Alicia Jackson, Fire Chief Mike Hertz, and Interim Police Chief Stan Reno.

2. Closed Meeting to Conduct Oral Interviews for Entry Level Police Officer

MOTION: T. Lomax moved, S. Jerstad seconded, that the Board hold a closed meeting for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1), specifically to conduct oral interviews for Entry Level Police Officer.

VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried. Open session recessed at 9:04 a.m.

3. Return to Open Session

There was no formal action taken as a result of the closed meeting. There being no further business to come before the Board, T. Lomax moved, R. Burnside seconded, that the Board return to open session.

VOTE: All voted Aye. No nays. Motion declared carried. Open session resumed at 9:58 a.m.

4. Approval of the Regular Meeting Minutes from February 18, 2021, and the Amended Meeting Minutes from December 17, 2020

The meeting minutes from December 17, 2020 were approved on February 18, 2021. However, Deputy City Clerk Clair Hayes pointed out that item #7 regarding the CSO Apprenticeship was left blank and had no discussion information about the topic. The only thing recorded was the motion to approve and the vote. The December 17 minutes were updated and amended for Board approval.

MOTION: R. Burnside moved, T. Lomax seconded, that the Board approve the regular meeting minutes from February 18, 2021, and the amended meeting minutes from December 20, 2020.

VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried.

5. Approval of the Annual Report of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners for Calendar Year 2020

MOTION: T. Lomax moved, R. Burnside seconded, that the Board approve the annual report of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners for calendar year 2020.

VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried.

6. Election of Board Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

The Governing Rules of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners provide that a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson be elected in April, to serve for one municipal fiscal year (May 1 through April 30).

Chairman Braswell opened the floor for any volunteers or nominations. It was suggested that Commissioner Kerry Braswell continue to serve as Chairperson for Fiscal Year 2022.

Commissioner Ted Lomax was nominated to serve as Vice-Chairperson for Fiscal Year 2022. There were no objections.

MOTION: T. Lomax moved, R. Burnside seconded, for Commissioner Kerry Braswell to serve as Chairperson for Fiscal Year 2022. VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried.

MOTION: K. Braswell moved, R. Burnside seconded, for Commissioner Ted Lomax to serve as Vice-Chairperson for Fiscal Year 2022. VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried.

Commissioners Kerry Braswell and Ted Lomax will serve as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, respectively, for a term beginning May 1, 2021, through April 30, 2022.

7. Review of the Entry-Level Firefighter Oral Interview Questions and Scoring

At the meeting held on August 1, 2019, the Board approved changes to the entry-level firefighter oral interview questions and oral interview scoring. The Board never got a chance to use the new scoring system after its approval because no examinations were held in 2020 due to COVID-19. Therefore, to avoid taking up extra time at the next meeting of oral interviews, Deputy City Clerk Clair Hayes briefly went through the questions and scoring to re-familiarize the Board with the new process.

It was asked if a scoring scale can also be utilized for the police oral interviews. The option was presented to the police and fire departments at the same time because they both basically had the same format. The only difference was that the fire department required an actual score because their eligible candidates are ranked. The Police Chief at the time, Jeff Grubbs, thought that it was in their best interest to keep it the way it is by not adding a scoring scale. After hearing the concerns from the Police Chief, the Board opted to keep the police oral interview questions and scoring the same (which is simply a pass or fail).

Members of the Board felt that this should be revisited because times in society have changed since the aforementioned meeting and the evaluation of entry-level police officers should be more critical. Taking on the oral interview scoring format like that of fire department will give the Board a chance to thoroughly evaluate police candidates which will be beneficial to the Police Department and Human Resources prior to the hiring process. It was also strongly encouraged to include questions regarding diversity and the candidate's interactions with diverse groups of people. The Board agreed and it was their consensus to bring the entry-level police oral interview questions back to the table for additions and/or revision and to implement a scoring system.

8. Approval of Changes in the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners Governing Rules as it Pertains to the Fire Captain Promotional Process

The labor agreement between the City of Carbondale and the Firefighters Local Union No. 1961 (effective May 1, 2021 through April 30, 2024) was passed by City Council on February 23, 2021. The Fire Captain promotional process is outlined step by step in the Firefighter’s labor agreement and must be administered strictly as it is written. Minor changes were made in the Fire Captain promotional process that will need to be reflected in the Board Governing Rules.

MOTION: T. Lomax moved, R. Burnside seconded, to approve the changes in the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners Governing Rules as it pertains to the Fire Captain Promotional Process.

VOTE: All voted Aye. No Nays. Motion declared carried.

9. Board Comments

Deputy City Clerk Clair Hayes informed the Board that the City Manager would like to meet with them soon to discuss remote testing for entry-level police officer. This meeting will come after the City Manager has a discussion with City Staff regarding the same topic. Candidate/applicant numbers for the police exam continue to decline and the City Manager would like to discuss alternatives to bring in more recruits. A special meeting is due to take place sometime in May.

Deputy City Clerk Clair Hayes also informed the Board of the upcoming Fire Captain promotional process. It will be initiated with a notification to the eligible candidates informing them that the process is underway and the time frame of each segment. This includes the oral interview with the Board which is temporarily scheduled for Thursday, July 22 contingent upon the Board’s schedule. It was stressed that once the notification goes out to the candidates, the schedule for the Fire Captain promotional process cannot be changed under any circumstance.

10. Citizen’s Comments

None

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Clinette C. Hayes, Deputy City Clerk

Approved by the Board on _____