

Minutes of the September 11, 2007, Michigan City Fire Merit Commission Meeting

Chairman John Skierkowski called the meeting to order. A quorum was noted as present with all commissioners, John Skierkowski, Chris Chatfield, Louise Mock, John Stimley, and Bart Lombard, in attendance.

Others present included Pam Krause, Pat Boy, Philip Jankowski, David Lamb, Randy Novak, Mark Baker, Michael Rivera, Wesley Scully, and Kathy Dubie.

Approval of minutes was postponed until the October meeting.

Communications: A bill for training was received from Sarah Smith. Also received were copies of certificates issued to 20 firefighters for completion of high angle technical training.

Report from Council Liaison: Pat Boy reported that the update to the municipal codes has not been completed.

Report from Commission Attorney: Pamela Krause reported that she recently met with the city attorney and the human rights commission attorney. They will continue to meet, and Pam was asked to bring information from the commission's last applicant testing round to determine if positive changes have been made in the process. Pam added that the meetings have been scheduled regarding the consent decree. After some further discussion, Pam said the matter is bigger than the commission's individual situation. Bart Lombard questioned if anyone has attempted to contact Judge Sharp. Pam said that is not proper protocol and legal action would need to occur to receive updates on the status of the consent decree. She added that the commission should not institute litigation until more information has been received. The commission needs to show that the decree has been satisfied. Litigation could then be instituted.

There was no New Business.

Old Business: John Skierkowski moved that Sarah Smith's bill be submitted for payment. Bart Lombard asked that Mr. Skierkowski relinquish the chair in order to make the motion. Mr. Skierkowski withdrew his motion. Chris Chatfield moved that Sarah Smith's bill be submitted for payment. Bart Lombard seconded the motion which passed.

Chris Chatfield reported that Stanard & Associates will conduct its applicant training session on September 26 and moved that they be paid in an amount not to exceed \$750. The motion was seconded by Bart Lombard. This fee will be submitted to the Board of Works for payment. The motion passed.

At the request of Mr. Lombard, Chris Chatfield announced all dates for the testing/interview process:

Applications due no later than 4:00 p.m. on Sept. 14, 2007
Test review on Sept. 26, 2007
Written test and (for those that pass) aerial climb on Sept. 29, 2007
Physical agility testing in Portage on October 27, 2007
Oral interviews on November 10 and December 1, 2007

Chairman Skierkowski reported that he sent a letter to the Board of Works requesting \$3000 for applicant testing.

Wes Scully discussed this year's testing, advertising, etc. as well as the process used last year and the status of the current eligibility list. He was told that everyone currently on the list should apply for this round of testing since the current list will not be used in 2008. Mr. Scully added that he still feels that minorities are not getting an opportunity to be hired.

After some discussion, clarification was made that applicants do not complete a physical during the commission's process. Each applicant must, however, pass a PERF physical prior to being hired by the commission.

Michael Rivera, NAACP, commented that there is still quite a bit to do to become compliant with the consent decree. John Skierkowski explained that hiring process. Bart Lombard added that the commission must follow the ordinance, and the city council, not the commission, can change the ordinance and the hiring process. The discussion continued, and Chairman Skierkowski stated that, for the record, "this commission had a concern about how information was going out to the public."

In response to a question from Pat Boy, it was reported that the commission did meet in a scheduled meeting on August 20, 2007, and did vote favorably to administer the agility testing through the Portage fire department.

Chief Lamb discussed his monthly report. All three probationary firefighters are currently attending the fire academy.

Comments: Bart Lombard asked Chris Chatfield to again provide the dates for all parts of this year's applicant process. He also asked that the commission pay recognition to Carla Adams, Deputy Clerk, who recently passed away.

On a motion by Bart Lombard the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Mock
by Kathy Dubie, Recording Secretary