

## MICHIGAN CITY FIRE MERIT COMMISSION

100 EAST MICHIGAN BOULEVARD  
MICHIGAN CITY, INDIANA 46360  
219-873-1570  
KEITH HARRIS, PRESIDENT  
JOHN SKIERKOWSKI, VICE PRESIDENT  
LOUISE MOCK, SECRETARY  
ROBERT POLLOCK, COMMISSIONER  
GEOFF PLUMMER, COMMISSIONER



Michigan City Fire Merit Commission Meeting Minutes: March 4, 2013

President Harris called the meeting to order at 5:00p.m. A quorum was noted with Commissioners Keith Harris, John Skierkowski, Louise Mock, and Robert Pollock in attendance; Geoff Plummer noted as absent. Others present Chief Ronnie Martin, Attorney Pamela Krause and Secretary Dawn Howader.

Commissioner Harris called for amendment of agenda to add Career Fairs to New Business item b, approval of the amended agenda motioned by Commissioner Skierkowski, 2nd by Commissioner Mock; **Ayes 4 Nays 0; motion carries**

Approval of minutes from February 4, 2013 by Commissioner Skierkowski, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Pollock; **Ayes 4 Nays 0; motion carries**

There were no communications. Claim in the amount of \$500.00 from Attorney Pamela Krause for Commission's legal fees. Motion for approval of payment by Commissioner Pollock, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Skierkowski; **Ayes 4 Nays 0; motion carries**

### **Reports from City Council Liaison**

Council member Schwanke stated nothing at this time, later on in meeting.

**No reports from Fire Merit Commission Attorney Krause.**

### **New Business**

Commissioner Harris stated that there are two (2) Career Fairs coming up. First will be on Tuesday, March 12, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Ivy Tech. The second Career Fair at Michigan City High School April 19, 2013, from 9:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Any member of the board that can spend time at either fair would be appreciated.

### **Old Business**

Commissioner Harris stated that at the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting the Minority Hiring List was tabled. Commissioner Pollock motioned to take it off the table, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Skierkowski: **Ayes 4 Nays 0; motion carries**

Commissioner Harris asked the commissioners for any comments. Commissioner Pollock stated that after going over letters and responses, we must abide by the Court Decree. He stated that we must agree to this but we will have serious legal problems. Attorney Krause stated there was no dispute over this issue; it wasn't the process it was the adding to the Minority List. We will need an ordinance change to

remove the word "Minority". This would require you to present this to the council. Commissioner Harris stated that this all goes back to the debate, do we follow the Hiring Ordinance as written or the Consent Judgment of 1976. And we were instructed by all the parties involved, approximately a year ago, that we are to follow the Hiring Ordinance. Commissioner Harris then added that a public comment that was made at the last meeting, regarding speaking with Judge Alevesos. He received an email after that meeting from the City Attorney that it would be inappropriate from anyone from the commission to ask a sitting Judge for his opinion on something that is not before their court. Commissioner Harris stated that if any changes that may be requested to be made, must be made as a motion. Commissioner Pollock stated that during the current hiring process we should continue with Court Decree until any changes can be made. Commissioner Harris asked if he is asking the Commission to rescind from the requested change in December. Commissioner Pollock made the motion to rescind the determination to add to the Minority Hiring List, and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Mock: **Ayes 4 Nays 0; motion carries**

Commissioner Harris opened for public comment or questions. Mike Neulieb asked whether we are to follow the ordinance and not the Decree. Wouldn't you want to add more to the Minority List? Commissioner Harris stated that, this is what we are considering. Mr. Neulieb said that the Commission can only make the suggestion and the council makes the final decision, correct? Commissioner Harris responded that our Motion today is to rescind from adding to the Minority List.

Spencer Walker, Michigan City Firefighter stated this is the same thing we went over last month. It is the City Councils Ordinance, the commission made the recommendation or decision to add other Minority's last December. Commissioner Harris stated it was not to change the ordinance; it was to change the understanding of the ordinance. Commissioner Harris asked for Secretary to call for vote of the Commissioner's: **Ayes 2 Nays 2; motion fails**

Chief Martin called Public Relations, Mark Baker to join him at the podium. Chief Martin stated that Councilman Schwanke came to his office with a challenge. It was to give his men recognition and praise publically. Chief stated his appreciation of the firefighters and the good work that they do.

Chief Martin reported that there will be two (2) probationary firefighters that will be promoted to first class, Firefighter Shannon Border as of March 14, 2013 and Firefighter Jason Wise as of March 20, 2013. Chief Martin asks the Commission that his recommendation would be to promote the two (2) firefighters when their dates become effective, they get promoted to first class. Commissioner Harris asks for Motion to promote the two (2) firefighters to first class when date is effective, Commissioner Skierkowski makes Motion and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Pollock: **Ayes 4 Nays 0; motion carries**

Chief Martin congratulated the two (2) new firefighters and stated that they are outstanding firefighters to add to the family of firefighters. Chief Welcomes Ron Miller and Kelly Smith from the News Dispatch and appreciates their presence in time of recognition. Chief brought a beautiful plaque that was given to him by Councilman Schwanke. He has emailed the firefighters, asking them for a name for the plaque. The plaque will be a symbol of what the firefighters do and their accomplishments. It will travel to each station. Once a name has been chosen it will be added to the plaque. It's a tribute to what they do, day in and day out. We will be forming a committee in charge of the plaque. As the Chief you need to recognize the outstanding works of your firefighters. Chief Martin awarded Captain Cox, Firefighter Glover, Firefighter Tom Frontcakas, Lt. Brad Neulieb a Certificate of Special Recognition. The firefighters not only are out fighting fires but they provide a service for the community. Between the visits to the schools, but also the community training of CPR. Thank you.

Commissioner Skierkowski commented he appreciates the service and the outstanding works of the Michigan City Fire Department. You do this day in and day out, thank you.

Commissioner Harris stated his thanks to the Chief for bringing this to the meeting and showcase the firefighters for their hard dedicated work. To show the public what has been done in the community by these fine men.

Public Comments: Spencer Walker, Michigan City Firefighter, commented that in July, Hoosier Burn Camp will be in Michigan City. We may be looking for support or recognition for this event. Chairperson of the event is Lt. Darren Westphal. Firefighter Walker will get back with Commission on the dates.

Attorney Drake commented that the City of Michigan City has made the decision of what is best for the Fire Commission. The languages between the two (2) are different. Consent Decree would have the authority. Drake said the Commission should ask the City Council, to change the ordinance to be consistent with the Consent Decree.

**Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Pollock and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Skierkowski Commission voted (4) Ayes – (0) Nays motion carries. 5:50 p.m.**

**Next meeting April 1, 2013 @ 5 p.m.**