

Minutes of the April 7, 2008, Michigan City Fire Merit Commission Meeting

President Bart Lombard called the meeting to order. A quorum was present with Commissioners Bart Lombard, John Stimley, Louise Mock, John Skierkowski, and Keith Harris in attendance. Others present included Pamela Krause, Sarah Smith, Dave Lamb, Doug Bolka, Randy Novak, Michael Osborne, Joan Chumley, Wes Scully, Michael Rivera, and Kathy Dubie.

The minutes of the March meeting were not available and action will be held over to the May meeting.

A discussion regarding minutes/agenda/etc. being available on the municipal website took place. The commissioners agreed that minutes should not be posted until approved by the commission. Joan Chumley said that not all minutes from previous meetings were posted, and they should be updated.

Communications: Bart Lombard said there are two disciplinary matters which need action by the commission. Copies will be distributed to all commissioners with further action being determined at the May meeting.

Attorney Krause stated that the commission needs to schedule a hearing for the week of May 19 regarding another matter. The hearing will be held on May 19 at 5:00 p.m., and notification will be prepared by Attorney Krause. City Attorney Espar will provide for staff to record the hearing and Attorney Krause will notice all commissioners.

Report from the Commission Attorney: Mr. Lombard asked Attorney Krause to explain the classification of minority. He added that consideration to defining the minority classification in the ordinance should be made. He also indicated that the application for employment might need to be changed since there currently is not any method to indicate minority status. Commissioner Harris asked if that violates federal law, and Attorney Krause said that it does. Further discussion was held.

In response to a question from Wes Scully, the four categories of race are African American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and Caucasian/Asian. Regarding the consent decree, women are included in the minority classification.

On another applicant matter, Mr. Lombard reported that the ordinance currently requires all applicants to complete and submit two applications. He has sent this information to all current applicants.

Old Business: Mr. Lombard asked Sarah Smith to address the commission. Ms. Smith stated that she would be happy to work with the department regarding the September 20 promotional testing. She suggested adding supervisory skills to the training. After some discussion, she agreed to submit two formal proposals for the June 2 meeting.

After some discussion regarding the evaluation of the fire chief, the commission agreed that the chief should do his own evaluation for submittal to the commission. Randy Novak, former acting chief, asked if he should use the same process and was told that he should.

New Business: Bart Lombard reported that applications for probationary firefighter will be accepted year-round. The 2008-10 hiring list for non-minorities has been completed. In compliance with the ordinance, which requires the creation of a minority list, only minorities will be tested and ranked during the upcoming round. The testing schedule is: May 29, tutorial; May 31 written test.

Those minorities submitting application by 4:30 p.m. on May 16 will be able to test this year. The personnel director will be contacted to place an advertisement in local newspapers. Scott Kaletha questioned the plan and was told that only minorities will be eligible to test this year. Attorney Krause agreed to draft the advertisement and work with the personnel director to have it placed in the newspaper.

Mr. Lombard stressed the need to do each portion of the application and testing process correctly. After discussion, it was agreed that applicants will have eight weeks to review the CPAT DVD prior to the ability test being administered.

Kyle Kazmierczak will obtain the availability of the Portage fire department facilities for July testing and report back to the commission at its May meeting.

475 President Douglas Bolka asked for clarification regarding the number of minorities that will be hired prior to the current hiring list being used and was told that the first two hired must be minorities. It was noted that Hispanics are not categorized as minorities.

A lengthy discussion was held regarding the sources used for population, etc. Scott Kaletha said that the number are skewed because of the Indiana State prison population.

Mr. Lombard said that further debate regarding the ordinance will be ruled out of order. Mr. Bolka was told that the two lists will become one when the racial makeup of the department mirrors the workforce of Michigan City.

The proposed Accident Waiver and Release of Liability form was discussed. With the inclusion of the Michigan City Fire Merit Commission in the first paragraph, on a motion by Keith Harris and a second by Louise Mock, the waiver was approved.

Kyle Kazmierczak asked for dates/times when the applicants will be able to complete the stair climb portion of the test. He was told Monday and Friday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. would be best. After further discussion Mr. Kazmierczak agreed that staff would agree to be available on Saturdays if needed. Applicants should call 873-1440 to schedule the stair climb.

The commissioners will be able to participate in a walk through at Blue Chip's new 25-story hotel on Thursday, April 17, at 1 p.m. Those attending should meet outside near the parking garage.

Chief Lamb provided copies of his monthly report and discussed its contents.

At the request of John Stimley, the commission will meet at 4 p.m. for its May 5 meeting.

On a motion by Keith Harris and a second by John Stimley the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise Mock, Secretary

By: Kathy Dubie, Recording Secretary