



## MICHIGAN CITY FIRE MERIT COMMISSION

100 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: October 7, 2013

President Harris called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum was noted with Commissioners Keith Harris, John Skierkowski, Louise Mock, Robert Pollock, and Geoff Plummer in attendance. Also present Attorney Pamela Krause, Fire Chief Ronnie Martin and Councilman Chris Schwanke.

A motion was made to approve the agenda for October 7, 2013 meeting with the addition to add the August 5, 2013 minutes to it. Commissioner Skierkowski made a motion to approve and Commissioner Mock 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the August 5, 2013 meeting. Commissioner Pollock made a motion to accept with the exception of deleting the last paragraph as it was placed on the minutes in error. Commissioners Skierkowski and Plummer both 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the September 3, 2013 meeting. Commissioner Pollock made a motion to approve and Commissioner Skierkowski 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

**Communications/Claims-** Commissioner Mock read the payroll report stating payroll was \$1,426.67. Commissioner Skierkowski made a motion to approve, Commissioner Pollock 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

Commissioner Mock read a letter that was addressed to Mayor Ron Meer and Fire Merit Commission President Keith Harris. The letter was from Commissioner Skierkowski stating he would be resigning from the commission effective October 25, 2013.

**Report from City Council Liaison, Chris Schwanke-** No report at this time.

**Report from Commission Attorney, Pamela Krause-** No report at this time.

**Report from Union Local 475-** They just stated that they would be voting on the contract between the city and Local 475 that night; Monday, October 7 and Tuesday, October 8.

## **New Business-**

### **A) Disciplinary Actions**

A motion was made to discuss Disciplinary actions dated September 17, 18 and 19, 2013. These cases would be number 1, 2 and 3. Commissioner Pollock made a motion and Commissioner Plummer 2<sup>nd</sup>. A roll call was taking with all commissioners agreeing.

Case #1- Commissioner Skierkowski made a motion to approve the disciplinary action as written. Commissioner Pollock 2<sup>nd</sup>. A roll call was taken with all commissioners agreeing.

Case #2- At first Commissioner Skierkowski made a motion to approve the disciplinary action as written, Commissioner Pollock 2<sup>nd</sup>. Commissioner Skierkowski asked to resend his motion and come back to this case. Commissioner Pollock resend his 2<sup>nd</sup> motion as well.

Case #3- Commissioner Skierkowski made a motion to approve the disciplinary action as written. Commissioner Pollock 2<sup>nd</sup>. A roll call was taken with all commissioners agreeing.

Case #2- Commissioner Pollock made a motion to accept the Chief's recommendations and to also suggest that through an EPA program, the employee attend anger management classes. Commissioner Plummer 2<sup>nd</sup>. A roll call was taken with all the commissioners agreeing.

All three cases made a request for appeal.

Case #1- A request for a hearing was placed. Commissioner Pollock made a motion that it should be a review not a hearing. Commissioner Plummer 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Commission Attorney, Pamela Krause was then asked to explain the difference between a hearing and review. She stated that the ordinance from 2011, section 54-192 states that to have a review, the firefighter must place a request in writing to the Fire Merit Commission within 48 hours of being written up. A hearing would be any action that the Fire Chief could not do. A roll call was taken and the commission agreed that the case would be as is.

Case #2- Commissioner Skierkowski made a motion that the request be denied for appeal because it was not filed in a timely matter. Commissioner Plummer 2<sup>nd</sup>. A roll call was taken with all the commissioners agreeing.

Case #3- Commissioner Skierkowski made a motion that the request be denied for appeal because it was not filed in a timely matter. Commissioner Pollock 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Firefighter Smith addressed the commission about what would happen if the incident happens on a Thursday afternoon. He can't file an appeal on Friday, City Hall is closed Saturday and Sunday. Now his 48 hours have passed and he is denied his appeal because of the 48 hour rule. Commissioner Harris brought up that the ordinance does not state "business days". The commission stated that they understand this concern. Chief Martin stated that he would honor any request to come to City Hall to file an appeal. But he understands if an emergency comes up, the firefighter is unable to leave to come to City Hall. Commissioner Skierkowski resend his motion to accept the disciplinary action and Commissioner Pollock resend his motion. Commissioner Plummer made a motion to grant this case a review because the weekend came into play and not business days. Commissioner Pollock 2<sup>nd</sup>. A roll call was taken and the commissioners agreed to grant this case a review. Commissioner Harris stated that an executive session would be held and he would send a letter out for the time and date as Chief Martin stated he would prefer the review be done when the firefighter is off duty.

Commissioner Harris also stated that he could get with the City Attorney, Amber Lapaich to change the wording in the current ordinance to say "48 business days".

## **B) 2014 Testing Dates**

Testing will currently following the current guidelines. Dates were giving for the following:

Written Testing would be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of August which would be August 9, 2014.

Tutorial would be on the Thursday before, August 7, 2014.

Physical Agility Testing would be the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in October which would be October 11, 2014.

Promotion Testing would be the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of September which would be September 20, 2014. Alternate date is scheduled for September 13, 2014.

**Old Business-** The City Attorney, Amber Lapaich is still working on the ordinance changes. Commissioner Harris is going to get with her this month and see when will it be done. Commissioner Plummer stated that since this ordinance change is taking so long, that they really needed to looking into changing the EMT portion or it will be another 3 years before it can be changed again. Commissioner Harris stated that he would talk to Amber Lapaich and see if the ordinance is not complete, maybe there will be time to change it.

**Report from Chief Martin-** First, Chief Martin apologized for not attending the September 3, 2013 meeting. Second, he congratulated Commissioner Skierkowski.

Chief Martin then updated everyone on the new fire truck. That the final inspection was going to be done on October 8, 2013, and this truck would replace truck #4 at Cleveland Ave and Hwy 20. The current truck would then become a spare and the current spare will be used for training.

The 2013 recruit graduation was taking place that night, October 7, 2013. Michigan City has one recruit that would be graduating. He will start October 11, 2013 and will attend the EMT school.

Chief Martin is working with Audra Petersen with Michigan City Area Schools. The goal is to start young students thinking about becoming a firefighter. Chief Martin stated that you have to be 21 to become a firefighter, but not to be a volunteer. Their hopes are to get students interested at a younger age, they can get certified while in school and then go to Ivy Tech to get their EMT certifications, then at 21 be ready to become a firefighter.

The Brown Family who owns Bulk Transport has made a large donation to the Fire Department. They are using this donation at the training facility on Hitchcock Rd. Their hopes are to have the facility built and ready to go by the next academy. Then hoping to have the next academy here in Michigan City. The next academy in 2014 would have several recruits.

Chief Martin thanked Domino's Pizza for the offer they will be conducting on Wednesday, October 9, 2013. Between the hours of 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm, while delivering pizzas, Domino's and a firefighter will ask the customer if they have working smoke detectors. If the customer shows them that yes they do, Domino's will give them a free pizza.

Lastly, Chief Martin stated that the last couple of years, the police department has held a citizens academy. That is where they show citizens the ins and outs of being a police officer and how everything in the department works. Chief Martin thinks this would be a great idea for the fire department. He also had material if the commission would like to see how other communities have this program already going.

**Public Comment-** A firefighter that attended the meeting stated that he was very confused about the Disciplinary actions being called Case #1, #2 and #3. He said for example, if he was one of them, he would not know which case was his. So he asked that in an email or letter, they could state that you are case number ..., the commission said yes they could and would do that.

**Commission Comment-** Commissioner Harris thanked Commissioner Skierkowski for his experience and would be greatly missed.

Commissioner Skierkowski commented that he has been with the commission for some time, that it has been a learning experience, he is very proud to assist the commission, wished everyone the best and to the firefighters, be safe.

**Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Pollock and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Commissioner Plummer. Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

**Next meeting is Monday, November 4, 2013 @5:00 pm.**