



MICHIGAN CITY FIRE MERIT COMMISSION

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KEITH HARRIS, PRESIDENT
CHARLES WILLIAMS, VICE PRESIDENT
LOUISE MOCK, SECRETARY
ROBERT POLLOCK, COMMISSIONER
GEOFF PLUMMER, COMMISSIONER

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

President Harris called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. A quorum was noted with Commissioners Keith Harris, Charles Williams, Louise Mock, Robert Pollock, and Geoff Plummer in attendance. Also present Attorney Pamela Krause and Fire Chief Ronnie Martin. Councilman Chris Schwanke was absent. At that time Commissioner Harris introduced the new member, Vice President Charles Williams.

A motion was made to approve the agenda for November 4, 2013. Commissioner Plummer made a motion to accept and Commissioner Pollock 2nd. **Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the October 7, 2013 meeting. Commissioner Pollock made a motion to accept and Commissioner Plummer 2nd. **Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

Commissioner Harris stated for the record that an executive session that was scheduled for Wednesday, October 30, 2013 was not held. The reason being that the Commission did not have a quorum.

Communications/Claims- Commissioner Mock stated the payroll claim was for \$926.67. Commissioner Pollock made a motion to accept and Commissioner Plummer 2nd. **Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

Report from City Council Liaison, Chris Schwanke- Councilman Schwanke was not present and there was no report.

Report from Commission Attorney, Pamela Krause- No report

Report from Union Local 475- No report

Old Business- The agenda stated there would be a nomination and elections of commission Vice President. Commissioner Harris asked if this could be held off until next month since there would be elections of officers at that time. Attorney Pamela Krause said that would be fine since there is an election held once a year.

Old Business- Ordinance changes (final review) was on the agenda for this meeting. However, Commissioner Harris asked that since there was a new member, if this approval could be held off until next month, December 2, 2013 meeting, so that the Commission's new member could get a chance to look at it. Attorney Pamela Krause was asked if this could wait until next month and she suggested that it be tabled. Commissioner Pollock made a motion to table this until December 2, 2013 meeting and Commissioner Plummer 2nd. **Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

Firefighter Spencer Walker then asked to speak. He questioned if the Ordinance Changes would be reviewed issue by issue or as a whole. Commissioner Harris answered that as they go through, it will be reviewed issue by issue and amended at that time, but voted on for approval as a whole.

Report from Chief Martin- Chief Martin wanted to welcome new commissioner Charles Williams.

Chief Martin stated that the new Fire Truck #4 has arrived and is housed at the station on Cleveland Ave and Hwy. 20. Some of the public and commissioners have seen the new truck which has a lot of new features on it. He encouraged anyone that has not seen it to stop and look at it. There was also going to be an article in the paper about the new truck on Thursday, October 31, 2013 and also included in the article was the truck committee that helped put the truck together by designing it.

On October 28, 2013 Chief Martin had a meeting with the Michigan City Area Schools. Together, both parties are trying to add to the curriculum for students, firefighter 1 and firefighter 2 courses. This would be a big plus for Michigan City and give students a goal to become a firefighter. As these meetings move forward, he will invite the commission to attend plus the union.

Chief Martin recalled as mentioned last month, there was a donation from Brown Transportation. With this donation, a training tower is being built. This tower will be similar to the ones in Noble Township and Wayne Township. Once the tower is completed, Chief Martin hopes to have the Firefighter Academy here in Michigan City, and also use the tower to start a Citizens Fire Academy. He stated "It is time for the Fire Department to educate the public". The response to a Citizens Fire Academy has been outstanding and hopes to get one started soon.

Chief Martin stated that October was Fire Prevention Month. Firefighters have gone to many local businesses and schools to promote that when you change your clocks, change your batteries in your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

Chief Martin would like to start arson classes soon and has given this serious consideration. He would like to offer this to the Officers and Drivers in the near future.

There are two firefighters with 25 years on the department. One of these firefighters has been nominated for Firefighter of the Year. Nominations can come from the Commission, Officers and Office. The nominations are then sent to the Exchange Club who decides.

In closing Chief Martin stated that there has been a lot of progress made to promote the department and is glad it is coming together. He will keep the commission informed of all events, and the commission responded back that they would like to be invited and involved in these events.

Commissioner Harris also added that both him and Commissioner Pollock are members of the Exchange Club and are going to attend the luncheon for Firefighter of the year. If any like to attend with them, they can come along as their guest.

Public Comment- Mike Neulieb, President of the Local 475 wanted to discuss a few procedures. He asked when there is a review for a disciplinary action, a certified letter is sent stating what time and date the review is to be held. What happens when the firefighter does not show? Attorney Pamela Krause answered that the meeting would go on but without the firefighters input. That this has never happened before but the Commission could say this is done and this is the ruling. Mike Neulieb then asked what would happen if the Commission did not show? Attorney Pamela Krause explained that the Commission has to have a quorum to decide anything. Commissioner Harris added that the meeting that was scheduled on October 30, 2013 has been rescheduled to November 7, 2013. Attorney Pamela Krause added that the firefighter asking for review was very understand and very professional and agreed to rescheduling the meeting to November 7, 2013.

Mike Neulieb then stated that there was a second firefighter who requested a review, received the information and wrote a letter that he could not attend at that time and date. Mike stated that he was unhappy how the Commission handled these two situations.

Mike Neulieb also questioned the 48 hours asking for a review. He did not think this was enough time for the firefighter to do this if the Chief got 30 days to get his paperwork in order. Commissioner Harris stated that the 48 hours is just to provide written notice that the firefighter is requesting a review. No other action would be taken at that time.

Mike Neulieb wanted to know if the Commission saw all warning including Verbal warning paperwork. The Commission answered that they do not see Verbal warnings and Mike stated that he thinks the Commission is obligated to see these. Chief Martin then added that he sends all Verbal Warnings to personnel.

Mike Neulieb then asked if the Commission had the number of minorities on the job. Commissioner Harris said yes they do have it, but not with them at this time.

And lastly, Mike Neulieb said he would like to see the EMT portion on the application for hire.

Commission Comment- Chief Martin stated that he is starting now for 2015 testing to get the EMT portion on the application. He has been working with Michigan City Area Schools. It is a long and rough road to get this going, but he is starting now on the work. The New Prairie School System has a program in place right now that is similar to what we need. Chief Martin also added that this is not only for students 9-12 grade but he is working to educate the 18-19-20 year olds out of school that want to become firefighters. Also stated was that a person cannot walk in off the street and go through EMT certification classes, they have to have a sponsor. Chief Martin also is trying to find sponsors to help these people. Commissioner Harris stated he is not opposed to this change. But that if he wanted to get his EMT Certification, he wouldn't know where to go and that we have to educate the public. Chief Martin stated he is trying to build a path for people to take and get to their goal of being a firefighter.

Commissioner Mock made a motion to amend the payroll, the amount should be \$1,426.67. Commissioner Pollock 2nd. **Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.**

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Pollock and 2nd by Commissioner Plummer. Ayes 5 Nays 0; motion carries.

Next meeting will be Monday, December 2, 2013 @ 5:00 pm.