

**MICHIGAN CITY POLICE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 13, 2009**

The Police Civil Service Commission of Michigan City, Indiana, held its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 13, 2009 in the Council Chambers, at City Hall, located at 100 E. Michigan Blvd., Michigan City, Indiana.

**DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

A quorum was present to conduct business.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Commissioner Michael Palmer called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

Present: Commissioner Michael Palmer, Commissioner Deloise Howse, and Commissioner Michael Buda.

Also present: Commission Secretary Leni Barugh, Chief Ben Neitzel, Chief of Operations Mark Swistek, Chief of Services John Kintzele, Captain Mark Harris, Officer Douglas Samuelson, several other members of the department with their families and friends, Mrs. Renee Smith, Councilwoman Angie Nelson, Councilman Ron Meer and Ms. Laurie Wink of the News Dispatch.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Buda moved the minutes of the regular meeting of December 9th, executive and special meetings of December 17, 2008 be accepted as submitted. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Howse. **Motion carried 3-0.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**PROBATIONARY OFFICER REPORTS**

Captain Harris reported:

- Probationary Officer Bret Darrell has successfully completed his requirements at the academy and graduated in December. He has also completed the FTO program and will be operating as a solo officer under close supervision, for the remainder of his probationary period, which ends January 27, 2009.
- Steven Wiegel was sworn in as a probationary officer on December 15<sup>th</sup>. He is reporting to the Division of Professional Standards for his initial training and is scheduled to attend the academy May 18, thru August 28, 2009.

**APPLICANTS IN PROCESS**

POLYGRAPHS - None

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS- The background investigation on applicant Equia has been completed and will be given to the Commissioners after the meeting.

PHYSICAUPSYCHOLOGICAL - None

LOCAL PENSION BOARD/PERF — None

**PROMOTIONAL EXAM ISSUES**

The Commissioners received a letter signed by several officers regarding concerns they have with the promotional test given in November. The officers had requested a re-test and the Commissioners were asked for their comments on the matter. Commissioner Palmer explained that the problem the Commissioners have is that their concerns arose after the test, not before it. The Commissioners feel that an officer, who really wants to be promoted and puts effort into studying, should be able to pass. Ample time to study was provided. If a retest was approved then everyone who took the test would have to re-take it even if they passed. This would

not be fair to those who passed it the first time. On motion of Commissioner Howse, seconded by Commissioner Buda, the request for a re-test was denied. **Motion carried 3-0.**

### **PAST PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

Chief Neitzel reported that the past performance grading for July 1 — Dec 31, 2008 is underway. He anticipates they **will go to** the Board of Captains by the end of the month for their review.

Captain Hanis reported that two mandatory training classes for grading of officers have been **completed for all** supervisors. Two voluntary classes for patrolmen were lightly attended. The power point presentation used for the training is located on the hard drive to access for those who could not attend the training or may encounter problems and needs to review how to proceed.

### **APPLICANT TESTING**

A press release and flyers have been prepared announcing that the next date to conduct applicant interviews and testing is February 21, 2009. We have thirteen applications on file at present and the department stands at 87 members. Applications are available online at [michigancity.com](http://michigancity.com), at **the front desk at the** Police Department and at the Personnel office at City Hall.

### **RULE & REGULATION #8**

Commissioner Palmer stated additional changes were necessary to Rule & Regulation #8. Motion **was made** by Commissioner Howse, seconded by Commissioner Buda to accept the additional changes and send a copy to each member of the department. **Motion carried 3-0.**

## **NEW BUSINESS1**

### **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED SINCE LAST MEETING:**

- Copies of letters of congratulation from Mayor Oberlie **to Officer David Fleck** and Captain **Thomas Howe** for completing 30 years of service on December 11, 2008;
- Disciplinary matter from Sgt. Loniewski;
- Copies of letters from Mayor Oberlie to Officers Nicholas Krause, Detective Kenneth Drake, Detective Andrew **Paull** and **Detective Michelle Widelski congratulating them** upon achieving Master Patrolman certification;
- Copy of letter from Attorney Krause to Corporation Counsel;
- Letter from applicant Joey Getter with documentation;
- Bills to be paid in the amount of \$300.00.

On motion of Commissioner Howse, seconded by Commissioner Buda, bills totaling \$300.00 would be submitted for payment. **Motion Carried 3-0.**

### **ORAL INTERVIEW EXAM**

**The dates for the oral interviews have been** set for April 13, 14 and 15. Commissioner Palmer asked if a location has been secured for the interviews. Chief Neitzel advised that the training center is available but is looking for another neutral location. Twenty-one officers are eligible for the oral interview and they have all been advised to keep the April dates open because we will not reschedule the interview if it is missed.

## **REPORT FROM CHIEF NEITZEL**

Chief Neitzel wished everyone a Happy New Year and reported that the department has prepared four goals for the agency as a whole, each for its own work environment, which the mayor has reviewed. They are as follows:

1. In 2009 we are focusing heavily on the training **of supervisors**. Typically, in municipalities a supervisor rarely gets training as to what a supervisor would do and how to deal with subordinates. We are at a critical point, with many new young supervisors, and we have to see where we want to go in the future.
2. The second goal is to take a comprehensive look at the budget. Overtime tends to be the majority of

the budget. We have talked at meetings with supervisors and we will look at numbers to see if we can save some overtime expense at some of the festival events that we staff. They are aware of overtime issues and will see where we can cut down and yet maintain the safety of the city.

3. In 2010 we hope to go paperless. We want to review a paperless system and the field of data entry to reduce the cost of paper and time.
4. In communication with the public, to have crime alerts showing where crimes, robberies, etc. are happening by text messaging the information. There is a big advantage in text messaging. There is a new generation coming up that's all they do to communicate. We want to tap into their knowledge. We will have the ability to also text back to them when they give *us* information. We plan on a memo going to the public on the water bill so that information gets to everyone and launching the texting at a City Council meeting. We will use the program for two years and will know how many use it, and if it is beneficial, especially in reaching youth. We are the first one in the area and hope to be up and running in February or March.

Commissioner Palmer asked regarding the training of supervisors whether newly promoted corporals are going to school and was advised that they have extensive training when they are newly promoted.

Commissioner Palmer questioned regarding the review of overtime expenses, that special patrols should not be jeopardized by decreasing their presence. Chief Neitzel replied that we expect to minimize presence where it is not needed and give more overtime where we prefer to be, in the neighborhood with quality of life issues. Asked if we can address this issue with personnel on staff, Chief Neitzel said that the City Council is willing to put dollars there if need be. We are trying to be fiscally responsible and if we feel we need it they will support.

Commissioner Buda asked if continuing education classes for all supervisors are being given. Chief Neitzel replied that this is planned for at staff meetings, with the information taken back to lower levels.

Commissioner Palmer thanked Chief Neitzel for the goals, which sound very helpful both to the Department and the City, and expressed the hope that each one can be met, asking them to let us know if there is any way the Commission can help.

Chief Neitzel said the stats on crime for last year will be coming out shortly. There is a double digit reduction in crime. That is the trend, the economy gets worse and crime goes down. It is a testimony to the Police Department, as well as to the community working with us in crime fighting.

Chief Neitzel concluded his report by announcing the first recipient of the Christopher Smith Award. The idea came up last year for an annual award to be given in memory of Officer Christopher Smith who lost his life to cancer at the age of twenty-five. Five names were proposed at a staff meeting in December: Officers David Cooney, Greg Radiger, Douglas Samuelson, Shane Washluske and Corporal Ken Havlin. Officer Douglas Samuelson was voted to receive this award. A letter from his peer's states he was commended for putting his heart and soul into the profession, never says "I can't" and is available at any time when needed with his dog. His interaction with the public and especially with kids is greatly appreciated.

Officer Douglas Samuelson thanked everyone for the award and looks forward to working together thru 2009 and beyond.

#### **ASST. CHIEF COMMENTS**

Asst. Chief Kintzele thanked the Commissioners for their hard work and looks forward to working with us in 2009. He also congratulated Officer David Fleck and Capt. Tom Howe for devoting 3 decades to law enforcement.

Asst. Chief Swistek congratulated Officer Douglas Samuelson on being the 1<sup>st</sup> recipient of the Chris Smith Award.

#### **1 COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS**

All the Commissioners personally congratulated Officer Douglas Samuelson on receiving the award today. Commissioner Buda expressed appreciation to the Administration for coming up with this concept.

**'COUNCIL COMMENTS'**

Councilwoman Nelson and Councilman Meer expressed their pleasure in the presentation of this award and added their congratulations to Officer Samuelson.

Councilwoman Nelson announced today's meeting was going to be her last meeting as the liaison for the Commission but will try and attend future meetings. She stated she had been through the course the department will be using to train supervisors and spoke highly of it.

Commissioner Palmer on behalf of the Commissioners thanked Councilwoman Nelson for her support at the Commission meetings as liaison from the City Council and for all she has done with us and welcomed Councilman Meer to continue with us.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

The next meeting date of the Commission will be February 10, 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting recessed at 10:50 a.m. on motion of Commissioner **Buda, seconded by Commissioner Howse. Motion carried 3-0.**

The meeting resumed at 11:06 a.m. to rule on the disciplinary review meeting that took place in December to see whether the discipline is to stand or to be changed. On motion of Commissioner Howse, seconded by Commissioner Buda, the discipline given by Asst. Chief Kintzele is to remain as stated. **Motion carried 3-0.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m, on motion of Commissioner Howse, seconded by Commissioner Buda.

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Michael Buda, Secretary

ATTEST:

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Michael D. Palmer, President

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Deloise Howse, Vice-President