

*Sycamore Fire and Police Commission  
Regular Meeting Minutes*

*July 10, 2008*

**ROLL CALL**

Chairman Petersen called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. Present at the meeting were: Commissioner Ron Short, Commissioner Samantha Dailey, Fire Chief Bill Riddle, Police Chief Don Thomas, and City Attorney Kevin Buick

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion**

Commissioner Dailey moved to approve the agenda and Commissioner Short seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**A. Open Session**

**Motion**

Commissioner Short moved to approve the minutes from the open session of the May 5, 2008, meeting, as written, and Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

**B. Closed Session**

**Motion**

Commissioner Short moved to approve the minutes from the closed session of the May 5, 2008 meeting, as written, and Commissioner Dailey seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

**A. Approval of Bills**

Chairman Petersen reported that the Commission had received two invoices totaling \$426.56 for the Entry-level Firefighter testing announcements posted on the govjobs.com website and published in the DeKalb Daily Chronicle.

**Motion**

Commissioner Dailey moved to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$426.56 and Commissioner Short seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

**B. Letter from the City Manager authorizing the creation of a seventh Lieutenant's position in the Fire Department**

Chairman Petersen read a letter from the City Manager dated June 17, 2008 and addressed to the Commissioners in which he stated that the City Council had approved the creation of a seventh Lieutenant's position. This position would be that of a "swing" Lieutenant, which will help to control the overtime costs incurred by the Fire Department. Chief Riddle reported that Marc

Doty, the next Firefighter on the promotional eligibility list, was sworn in as Fire Lieutenant on June 23, 2008.

**Motion**

Commissioner Dailey moved to approve the promotion of Firefighter Marc Doty to the rank of Fire Lieutenant effective June 23, 2008 and Commissioner Short seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

**C. Letter from the City Manager authorizing the hiring of a Police Officer on September 1, 2008**

Recording Secretary Tritle reported that City Manager Bill Nicklas has asked her to inform the Commissioners that this request should be put on hold until December 2008 or January 2009 because, as of today, he had not yet received a written commitment from the Sycamore School District concerning their portion of the cost to fund this position.

**D. Letter from a Police Officer Candidate requesting that he no longer be considered for a position with the Sycamore Police Department**

Zachary Thoms sent a request to the Commission asking that his name be removed from the current Police Officer Eligibility List as he had accepted a position with the Milwaukee Police Department. The Commissioners agreed and will send a letter to Mt. Thoms acknowledging his request.

**E. End of Probationary Period for Firefighter Dustin Ruby**

Chairman Petersen read a letter from Chief Riddle in which he officially notified the Commission that Firefighter Dustin Ruby had fulfilled all of the requirements of his probationary period effective June 4, 2008.

**Motion**

Commissioner Dailey moved to acknowledge the successful completion of Firefighter Dustin Ruby's probationary period and Commissioner Short seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

A letter will be sent to Firefighter Ruby from the Commissioners to acknowledge his accomplishment.

**F. End of Probationary Period for Police Officer Joseph Meeks**

Chairman Petersen read a letter from Chief Thomas in which he officially notified the Commission that Police Officer Joseph Meeks had fulfilled all of the requirements of his probationary period effective June 18, 2008.

**Motion**

Commissioner Dailey moved to acknowledge the successful completion of Police Officer Joseph Meek's probationary period and Commissioner Short seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

A letter will be sent to Police Officer Meeks from the Commissioners to acknowledge his accomplishment.

## OLD BUSINESS

### A. **Follow-up Discussion on requiring a Pre-employment Physical Agility Test for Police Officer Candidates**

Chief Thomas recommended that, after a conditional offer of employment is made and pending the medical and psychological exams, a candidate be given the power test within thirty days of going to the Academy. He added that this would be for advisory purposes only. City Attorney Buick stated that, according to current State Statutes, it is considered “stepping over the line” to use the power test as a part of the selection criteria. He added that he has no problem with pre-certifying a candidate in the power test before he or she attends the Academy, but, if the candidate flunks the certification exam, they must still be allowed to attend the Academy. The candidate must also be told that they will not be eliminated from the hiring process if they do not pass the pre-certification exam. Commissioner Short wondered if this could be added to the medical examination. Chief Riddle suggested that this could be done as a functional capacity examination. Mr. Buick stated that, if it were added to the medical exam, it would be easier to defend if challenged in court. Chief Thomas stated that he would talk to Dr. Gannon Kishwaukee Corporate Health to get his advice on this matter. Mr. Buick reiterated that it is still best to keep this test as “advisory only”.

### B. **Follow-up discussion regarding the Testing Schedule to establish a new Eligibility List for Firefighters and new Promotional Lists for the Positions of Police Sergeant and Fire Lieutenant**

NOTE: Commissioner Dailey left the meeting to take a phone call at 1:30 p.m. and returned at 1:33 p.m.

#### 1. **Testing Dates**

- The written exam to establish an entry-level Firefighter Eligibility List will be administered on July 19, 2008 immediately after orientation.
- Oral examinations for the entry-level Firefighter candidates will be given during the week of August 4, 2008 between the hours of 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. The interview panel will consist of the three Commissioners, the Assistant Fire Chief, a Firefighter, and the Human Resources Director.
- Oral examinations for the position of Police Sergeant will be given on September 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24, 2008. They will also be given on October 2, 2008 to accommodate any Police Officers who had planned vacations during the week of September 22<sup>nd</sup>. The interview panel will consist of the three Commissioners.
- Oral Examinations for the position of Fire Lieutenant will be given on September 25, 2008. The interview panel will consist of the three Commissioners.
- The written examination for the Police Sergeants and Fire Lieutenants will be administered on October 14, 2008 at 11:00 a.m. This was changed from September 29, 2008 to fulfill the 120 day notice required by the Firefighters Promotion Act.

#### 2. **Scoring of the Fire Lieutenant Written Examination**

- Chief Riddle reported that the Fire Union requested that the written exam be scored on-site. Mr. Buick also recommended that the tests be scored on-site. I/O Solutions will score both the Fire and Police promotional examinations on-site for an additional \$500.00 fee.
- Recording Secretary Tritle suggested that a letter be sent to the Firefighter union to remind them that they will need to find a monitor to oversee the written exam

process for Fire Lieutenant, since this was a problem three years ago when the test was conducted. Mr. Buick agreed that this would be appropriate to send.

- Chief Thomas stated that he does not want to post the test scores after each step of the promotional process; he prefers that the test results be released on an individual basis if a candidate calls and requests his or her score.

### **3. I/O Solutions Contract**

Recording Secretary Tritle reported that she had received the contracts from I/O Solutions to administer the written examinations for the entry-level Firefighter applicants and for the Police Sergeant and Fire Lieutenant Eligibility lists. The terms of the contracts agreed with the dates and services outlined by the Commissioners, so she will have City Manager Bill Nicklas sign them and will then send them back to I/O Solutions.

### **3. Test Questions for the Police Sergeant and Fire Lieutenant Oral Exams**

Fire Chief Riddle stated that he believes the Commissioners should develop new questions for the Fire Lieutenant oral exam so that the questions are not passed on by the candidates to other candidates year after year. He added that he is comfortable with the characteristics being tested. Chief Thomas stated that he did not think it was necessary to change the questions for the Police Sergeant exam, since it has been three years since the last exam.

Commissioner Short asked Chief Riddle if he and another department member would complete the questionnaire on performance skills that he had previously given to the Chief so that he can devise the questions for the entry-level Firefighter oral exams based upon the criteria defined by the results of the questionnaire.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Discussion on using local vendors to perform pre-employment polygraph and psychological examinations**

Recording Secretary Tritle said that she had received information from the Braden Counseling Center in Sycamore concerning the pre-employment examinations that they provide to Police and Fire candidates. Dr. Jayne Braden would administer the psychological examinations and Al Trotsky would administer the polygraph exam. Recording Secretary Tritle explained that she was bringing this information to the Commissioners and the two Chiefs to see if they would be interested in having these services provided by local vendors, since candidates currently have to travel to Oak Brook to have these examinations administered by I/O Solutions. Chief Thomas answered that he had no objection to using these two vendors, as they both have good reputations. Chief Riddle stated that he doesn't mind using them either, as long as they don't have a high failure rate. Chairman Petersen concurred that it is a good idea to use local vendors whenever possible. Recording Secretary Tritle said that she would ask Dr. Braden to attend the October meeting of the Commission to conduct a presentation of the services her Center has to offer.

### **B. Fire Chief**

Chief Riddle informed the Commission that Firefighter Andrew Powers would be completing his probationary period by the time they met again in October. He suggested that the Commissioners hold their next meeting at the new Fire Station so that they can tour the facilities.

**D. Police Chief**

Chief Thomas reported that Lt. Tom Scott has announced his intention to retire on October 31, 2008. The next candidate on the eligibility list, Brad Kummer, is currently attending the Academy. Chief Thomas had recently spoken with Mr. Kummer, who indicated to him that he was still interested in coming to work for the Sycamore Police Department. If we were to hire him, the City may need to consider reimbursing the town of Huntley, his current employer, for his tuition to the Academy. If that is not a possibility, the next candidate would be Christie Haas, who is the daughter of Sycamore Police Officer Dave Haas. Chief Thomas stated that he has begun the background examinations on Christie Haas and Todd Stroyan, the candidate after Ms. Haas on the eligibility list. Commissioner Dailey asked if there would be any conflict if the Sycamore Police Department employed a father and a daughter. Recording Secretary Tritle answered that this does not violate the City's nepotism policy as long as Mr. Haas does not supervise his daughter.

**CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS**

Chairman Peterson stated that there were no matters before the Board that required the Commissioners to go into closed session.

**ADJOURNMENT**


**Motion**

Commissioner Dailey moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:09 p.m. and Commissioner Short seconded the motion.

**Vote**

All Commissioners voted aye. Motion carried 3 - 0.

Minutes accepted by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Petersen, Chairman

8/13/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jean Tritle, Recording Secretary

8/13/08  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date