



MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION MEETING

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022

Members Present: Susan Figler, Chair
Tim Fenwick, Vice Chair
Rainy Boucher

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Debra Bennington, Civil Service Clerk
Mark Stone, Fire Chief
Jeffrey Film, Chief of Police
Bryan Snavelly, Police Captain
Jaime Syx, Law Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Figler called the special Civil Service Commission meeting of March 1, 2022 to order at 8:01 a.m. and Ms. Bennington called the roll.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion:

Mr. Fenwick moved and Ms. Boucher seconded to approve the minutes of February 1, 2022 as submitted.

Yes Votes: Boucher, Fenwick, Figler

No Votes: None. The motion carried.

III. OLD BUSINESS

None.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review Proposals – Police Officer Entry-Level Examination

The Commission reviewed proposals submitted by Ramsey & Associates and the National Testing Network (NTN). Chief Film and Captain Snavelly both were in favor of trying NTN to open our candidate pool. Other departments in Summit and Cuyahoga Counties use this exclusively. Some parameters will need looked at to ensure they meet our Civil Service rules. There are many positives to using

NTN such as on-line capabilities, able to set a window for testing time, and to keep testing open longer. Another feature is that candidates who have already tested with NTN can pay a transfer fee to NTN to have their scores applied to our test. After our last exam and fitness test, we only had 14-15 candidates. Then the background investigation excluded more, which left us with six (6) and none of them have the academy. We have authorization to hire but no academy is starting so we are in a real pinch.

Captain Snavely thought it opens it up to the candidates in being more efficient for them. There was group of people who were currently in an academy that could not take our last test because they had to attend to academy business on the date and time of our test. With this being more flexible, he hopes it will be helpful to those people who desire to be in the profession.

Ms. Figler assumed geography also applies. Someone who is in Columbus could take the test and not have to worry about getting to Stow on a certain date and time. Chief Film thought that also applies to military deployment or assignment.

Motion:

Ms. Figler moved and Mr. Fenwick seconded to go with Chief Film's recommendation to use National Testing Network.

Yes Votes: Boucher, Fenwick, Figler

No Votes: None. The motion carried.

B. Firefighter Entry-Level Examination Discussion

Chief Stone had two thoughts:

- 1) Can we give another test while keeping the current test alive then combine the two lists to broaden our ability to have a wider candidate pool as we are trying to open up the diversity in our ranks?
- 2) Should we consider reducing the eligibility list duration to one year with the ability to extend it if we have enough good candidates on the list?

When we test every two (2) years, there are people who cannot take our test due to our requirements but then become eligible within the next few months or year. He thought this would open up the pool. The number of people testing is much smaller these days. Every year a couple of dozen candidates come out of paramedic school, which is a requirement of ours. It seems the people who take our tests are limited to the local area and we rely on the few paramedic schools here to produce candidates we can use.

Ms. Figler thought what she was hearing is that back in the day the 2-year was great because the pool was larger and it worked. Now the flip side is the pool is smaller so they are being asked to consider more of a one year thing looking to extend it if need be.

Mr. Fenwick commented what we have done in the past is if additional candidates were needed within the two years we would give a new test. He asked Chief Stone how it helps to change the rule to one year and require a test every one year. Chief Stone replied it opens up the test to people who were not eligible to take the previous years' test due to age, paramedic school, etc. He thinks we will get more candidates to take the test.

Chief Stone commented we have an opinion from the Law Director on whether we can combine the two tests and it looks like we can keep our current list alive. Candidates from Bands A and B are on the current Certified Eligible List, however that pool of candidates is now down to twelve (12) so it really has not improved. If we are able to give another test, possibly some of the people who did not feel eligible in the past can take the test and we can reach out to different avenues to try to promote more minorities.

Mr. Fenwick commented the way he reads the legal analysis is that anybody on the original eligibility list can retake the test; Ms. Syx responded yes. He asked what if they are already certified; Ms. Syx responded the rule does not speak to the certified list only the eligibility list. Mr. Fenwick commented that people on the eligibility list could retake it and theoretically, if we decide to allow them to choose their best score, jump ahead of people on the certified list who do not have a chance to retake it. Ms. Syx replied no, there is no order on the certified list. The band is the eligible list and once they move over to the certified list those bands go away and there is just one category of certified eligible. Mr. Fenwick questioned if there is grading on the certified list; Chief Stone replied no. Ms. Syx thought someone on the certified list would not want to retake the test because the whole point is to get on the certified list.

Ms. Syx thought people given the opportunity to take the test twice might have an advantage over the people who only have an opportunity to take it once. In addition, the rule should be specific so someone reading it does not have to guess which one of the scores count. She asked if candidates should get to pick their best score, or be stuck with the result from the second test. Mr. Fenwick thought the downside is if someone is on the eligible list and takes the second test but they do not score as well, they could go off the list. Ms. Syx commented they would still be on the list if they score within Bands A thru E. Chief Stone commented everyone has a good day and bad day when testing and thought keeping the better of the two scores would be beneficial. Ms. Figler thought someone having the initiative to take the test the second time should pick the best score; it does not hamper anyone who is taking it for the first time.

Ms. Boucher thought the rule is unclear of which score to use, but thinks candidates would want to use the higher score.

Mr. Fenwick reviewed the options – they get to use the highest score or they have to use the second score if they retake.

Chief Stone thought since we do banding it will not hinder the people who did not take it the first time since there is no ranking. They do not have to be in the top 10, but to be in Band A would need to score 90% or higher.

Mr. Fenwick thought the downside for candidates might be that more people are in the band because of this decision, but it does not hinder their potential to interview and move on. Chief Stone stated everyone in Band A always gets an interview. Mr. Fenwick commented since we are considering having a new test early, his preference would be to go out of the way to make it more palatable for the people who are already on the list to retake it if they want. Ms. Figler concurred.

Chief Stone commented some candidates take tests for practice. Younger candidates realize they are too young to be hired and are taking the test to get better at it. We have seen that people who have taken our tests multiple times over the years generally improve.

Motion:

Mr. Fenwick moved and Ms. Boucher seconded to approve the scheduling of the subsequent exam [sending RFP's to testing agencies] with the following rules in place:

- 1) Everyone on the original eligible list will be notified and given the opportunity to participate in the subsequent exam;
- 2) Everyone who is already on the certified eligible list will remain on that list;
- 3) From the eligible list, whoever chooses not to retake the exam their first score band and ranking will remain the same;
- 4) People that decide to retake the exam who are on the eligible list will have the choice of using their highest score;
- 5) The original eligible list will be combined with the subsequent eligible list to create the new eligible list;
- 6) The new eligible list will expire in two (2) years from the date created and the original eligible list will be void; and
- 7) The Commission will certify all names in the highest band. Those names will then move over to the previously existing certified eligibility list and be in addition to the previously certified candidates.

Yes Votes: Boucher, Fenwick, Figler

No Votes: None. The motion carried.

C. Civil Service Rule IV,3, Admittance to Examination May be Limited to One Sex

Ms. Syx noticed this rule while reviewing the rules on eligibility lists. She previously discussed this with Chief Film and Chief Stone and is recommending this item be removed from our rules and the rules be amended.

Motion:

Ms. Figler moved and Mr. Fenwick seconded to strike this language from the rules.

Yes Votes: Boucher, Fenwick, Figler

No Votes: None. The motion carried.

D. Miscellaneous

Chief Film will discuss with NTN our rule that requires a scoring protest/challenge period to ensure we can keep that protocol. If not, we may need to go back to a written test locally.

The testing fee for National Testing Network is \$55.00 per candidate and PoliceApp has a \$25.00 fee. To assist candidates with the cost, Chief Film would like to waive the PoliceApp fee, but he is unsure who would authorize it – the Commission or Board of Control. The Commission thought it would not be them. Chief Film requested the Commissions consent to move forward with his request and to confirm their backing. Mr. Fenwick confirmed they would be supportive because the goal is to get more candidates. Captain Snively informed the Commission the City did not collect the typical \$25.00 application fee for the last test since candidates had to pay a \$25.00 fee to PoliceApp.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:28 a.m.

Susan Figler
Chair, Civil Service Commission

Debra Bennington
Civil Service Clerk

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