



MINUTES for the GENERAL SESSION OF
THE CITY OF ALLENTOWN CIVIL SERVICE BOARD GOVERNING THE APPOINTMENT
AND PROMOTION OF POLICE OFFICERS AND FIRE FIGHTERS

Board Members in Attendance:

John Stribula, Chairman
Maria Brace, Board Member

Board Members Absent:

Yuvette Hailey , Alternate Member
Walter Felton, Secretary
Daniel Blount, Alternate Member

Staff in Attendance:

Joshua Mazin, Solicitor CSB
Madison Schettig, APD
Philip Shedaker, APD
Ryan Koons, APD
Kyle Pammer, APD
Jorge Periera, City Solicitor
Christopher Matthews, FOP
Matt Eharth, AFD (joining via Teams)
Hiba Khouri, HR Generalist
Stella Oakman, HR Generalist

Call to Order

Chairman John Stribula called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Stribula noted for the record that the Board met in executive session on March 20th , March 27th , and April 24th to review and discuss the existing rules in addition to personnel matters.

It was also noted that an executive session was held earlier this morning to discuss the appeal in front of the Board (Anthony Matthews) and questions the Board had regarding the Aspirant contract for the upcoming APD tests.

Roll Call

Roll call was conducted. Quorum was established.

Reading of the Minutes:

Minutes from the April 10th, 2026 were reviewed. No corrections or changes.

MOTION: Stribula moved that the minutes be approved as presented. Maria Brace seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

Old Business

- **Matter Before the Board (Matthews Appeal):**

MOTION: Brace moved to approve the appeal. Stribula seconded; Stribula then opened the floor for discussion either for or against.

- Stribula spoke for approval noting that the Board has a number of reasons for approving, all of which had been discussed in length during executive session(s).
- No one else spoke in the affirmative.

MOTION: Brace moved to sustain the appeal. Stribula seconded. Motion passed 2-0.

- Stribula noted that the Board has 45 days to inform the appellant and City of it's decision.
- Brace inquired as to Matthews' next steps. Stribula stated several things can happen – least of which would be APD continuing the background checks and process.
 - Ryan Koons informed the Board the packet was never filled out, as the process stopped when the appellant disclosed his Selective Service registration status, in addition to the pending decision of the appeal from the Board.
- There was discussion between the Board and Jorge Perreira as to when decision is final, when and if City does/will appeal and what the intent of the City is in regard to the Board's decision. Perreira noted that nothing will be decided until a formal decision is received.
- Stribula offered that in the interest of continuity of operations, APD should continue with the background investigation; with Matthews understanding he could still be disqualified if further investigations revealed other issues that would fall under the rules of automatic disqualification.
 - Koons asked the Board how they felt about moving forward, as he was currently working on the new list of candidates and Matthews was on the last (prior) list.
 - Brace noted that Koons should move forward with Matthews.

- Stribula asked when the next application period was and was informed it was May 15th. Stribula stated that Matthews could withdraw his current application, and reapply during the May 15th period. He noted however that if Matthews were to be disqualified a second time, he would become permanently ineligible for the future.
 - Koons noted that Matthews could be issued a withdrawal form and not be charged with disqualification.
 - Stribula noted that this action goes to past practice – the rules state “applicant” – the Board interprets that as “all”.
- Josh Mazin reminded everyone that the Board has the authority to interpret the rules.
- Perreira stated the Board can move forward; the City will respond in 45 days.
 - Koons informed the Board he had been warned by his predecessor that this matter (not registering for Selective Service) was going to be an issue. Koons noted if the rule is going away, due to changes in federal law, and a revision of the current Allentown Civil Service Rules, there is no history and the Board should allow Matthews to sign the withdrawal form.
- Matthews stated he was OK with submitting a withdrawal.
- Brace and Stribula noted that while Matthews can withdraw, a decision still must be made.
 - Brace reiterated to Matthews that to eliminate the possibility of a second disqualifying matter, a withdrawal should be strongly considered.
- Discussion was held regarding the change of federal law and how the need for the rule is moot. Both Perreira and Mazin agreed that this matter will not come up again.
- Both Brace and Stribula stressed that by changing the current rule a cure will be provided for the current situation.
- The Board reviewed the timeline of the federal law change as it relates to the timing of Matthews’ application.
- Matthews requested time to think about his options. The Board agreed he needed to weigh all options. The Board informed him he could be in contact with the Board, Koons, or Hiba Khouri from HR if he needed.
- **Matter Before the Board (Colon appeal)**

Stribula noted this was a continuation from the April meeting, based on the administration adding other disqualifying information and the appearance of unfairness to the appellant.
- Stribula recommended that the parties (APD and appellant) step away to discuss the process that the appellant would be facing if he pursued the appeal.
 - After nearly 45 minutes, the parties returned and the appellant stated he was withdrawing his application. He thanked everyone for their time. He also noted that he felt that a suspension of his license 15 years ago should not be reflective of his character now.
- Stribula noted that the appellant is withdrawing the appeal. Also noted is that the disqualification is on record, it is a limitation of the rules.

With nothing further, the appeal was closed.

New Business

- **Firefighter – multiple test failings**
 - Hiba Khouri reported that Nyemscek had tested and failed three times for a promotional exam. She noted that the rules state the Board “**may** refuse to place an applicant on the eligibility list.”
 - Matt Eharth stated if the Board chooses to allow the applicant to continue to test again the rule (Rule II, page 27) needs to be removed to allow for consistency moving forward.
 - Discussion took place as to how many times an applicant gets to take the test. Brace pointed out that if, for example, the applicant gets a 69 after three tries, the Board could allow the applicant to be placed on the promotional list.
 - Mazin noted the Board could not act at this time as the rule is clear the about the number of attempts and the disqualification.
 - Stribula stated the applicant can take the test, but no action can occur.

- **Approval of Deputy Chief Lis**
 - Khouri reported the test was held April 29th and had reviewed the scoring calculations. It was noted that Baer had asked to be removed from the list, and his name was stricken.
 - Stribula began reviewing the scoring calculations. He reported they were correct.
 - Khouri noted there will be a vacancy as of June 5th, 2026 when Chief Lenig retires.

MOTION: Brace moved to accept the list for Deputy Fire Chief as presented effective May 1st, 2026. Stribula seconded. Motion passed 2-0. The Board signed and approved the list as presented.

- **Rules Update**
 - Brace reported that the Board had met three times to review and make relevant recommendations for changes to the existing rules. All three of the meetings were in executive sessions.
 - One of the main talking points was preference points other than Veterans. Numerous other municipalities offer points for status such as residency (local), bilingual ability, completion of Cadet program trainings, etc.
 - It was noted that these other preferences can be stacked but the total of all shall not exceed the 10 points awarded for Veterans.
 - Discussion was held about removing the rule requiring registration for selective service immediately and presenting said change to City Council.

MOTION: Brace moved to remove Rule 1, pg 2 (APD), and Section 4.c, pg 20 (AFD) of the current rules (registration for Selective Service) and present change to City Council for approval. Stribula seconded. Lengthy discussion took place following:

- Brace noted the removal of the rule is two-fold (1) the federal law changes in late 2026, and (2), following the anti-discrimination statement (EEO) to Rule 1, the requirement of registration is discriminatory as women are not required to register, although the rule states “all applicants shall...”.
 - Brace noted that AFD did not have any objection to removal of the rule when it was pointed out to them.
 - Koons stated he was neither for nor against.
 - Brace reported that there is no law for the rule to be in the governing documents (it is not required by the Commonwealth Civil Service rules).
 - Stribula suggested that the appropriate sections be “repealed” versus “removed”.
 - When asked if the intent to repeal was to benefit the appellant Matthews, Braced replied that this was independent of the appeal. As a result of the appeal, by repealing the rule the appellant would have another option.
- Perreira questioned the Board about wanting to repeal the rule because of the conflict of interpretation.
 - Stribula replied that this had been brought up by the Deputy City Solicitor at the last meeting – the ordinance itself can’t be retroactive, but the date it is effective can be.
- Chris Matthews asked if the rule is required by MPOEC....he stated this is the governing body for municipal police forces and if they require it, the City has no choice but to maintain the rule. He noted MPOEC can supersede local rules.
 - Mazin replied that there were several municipalities that did not have the rule.
- Discussion ended at this point.

Motion passed 2-0. Mazin was tasked with submitting written letter and procedure to City Clerk for the next Council meeting.

- **Aspirant update**
 - Khouri reported that she is meeting with Purchasing on May 5th to review the Lieutenant and Sergeant purchase requests.
 - At this time, AFD is not looking into a vendor, as they test every two years

ALLENTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Khouri reported seven people will start June 5, 2026.
- No further updates

ALLENTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Koons reported he has exhausted the last list. On May 26th, 2026, new hires will begin, with a group of seven potential candidates.

There being no further business to discuss – **MOTION: Brace moved to adjourn the meeting. Stribula seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.**

Next meeting: The next general session meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 5th, 2026 at 9:00 am in the 5th Floor Conference Room. There is an executive meeting to be held May 8th, 2026 at 1:00 pm at the home of Maria Brace to complete the review of rules.

Submitted by: Stella Oakman