



MINUTES for the
REGULAR MEETING 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
Walter Felton, Secretary
Daniel Blount, Alternate Member

Board Members Absent:

Yvette Hailey , Alternate Member

Staff in Attendance:

Joshua Mazin, Solicitor CSB
Christopher Matthews, APD (FOP President)
Madison Schettig, APD
Charles Roca, Chief, APD
Jim Gress, APD
Tim Bruce, APD
Ryan Koons, APD
Jeremy Warmkessel, AFD (IAFFPresident)
Peter Lenig, AFD
Steve Salloum, HR Generalist - APD
Hiba Khouri, HR Generalist - Fire
Stella Oakman, HR Generalist

Guest:

Madeline Lewis, Aspirant LLC - APD

Call to Order

Chairman Stribula called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Roll was called. A quorum was present.

Reading of the Minutes:

Minutes from the November meeting were read. One change had to be made per email received by Deputy Chief Matt Eharth:

- In section C Provisional Appointment / B / ii -- minutes read as: “Eharth and Rotz noted that there is a request before City Council for the December 2nd meeting to approve as well.”
- **CORRECTION:** Minutes should read as “During this discussion, Deputy Chief Eharth noted that FM Steed would be testing on December 2nd and that if he passed it would go before the CSB on December 4th.”

There were no further changes to the minutes of either meeting mentioned above.

Motion made by Maria Brace to accept and approve the minutes as corrected and submitted. Walter Felton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (3-0), with Daniel Blount voting in the affirmative.

Motion made by Brace to accept and approve the minutes from the Special Session held on November 24, 2025 as presented. Felton seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously (3-0), with Blount voting in the affirmative.

Old Business

Chairman Stribula noted the session with HR will be rescheduled to a later date; this meeting will primarily focus on updating policies and procedures. Stribula also welcomed Ryan Koons and Phil Shedaker who are replacing past APD representatives Layton and Landis, as they retired as of December 2, 2025.

Civil Service Board Clarification

- Stribula stressed the importance of HR’s understanding of succession (referring to the recent retirements of 12-14 APD personnel at the beginning of the month).
 - Stribula also stated this will be wrapped into the executive session with HR to be scheduled.

Nick Murray Appeal

- Hiba Khouri reported that a letter had been sent to the Board regarding the appeal. Stribula requested that a meeting be held when Murray is on duty. Jeremy Warmkessel stated the union will submit a position paper within five (5) days.
 - The Board agreed to have the hearing next Friday, December 12, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.
 - Maria Brace asked Hiba to state the rules – Hiba noted the rules state individual has one appeal if they are disqualified or fail the test. Murray is third on the list and wanted to clarify with the Board if this situation falls under the list.
 - Brace stated that this should be redefined – it was not an appeal, but a concern rather than a disqualification. She asked if his concern could be heard as to process – did he have the right to appeal as he is third on the

list. It was noted his written test was good, but he moved down the list following the oral interview panel.

- Stribula reviewed the intent of the rule regarding appeals and disqualifications.
- Hiba stated the City position is to disqualify in full.
 - Members of the Board stated they felt there was merit in hearing Murray.
- Stribula directed Josh Mazin to send a letter to Murray regarding the appeal hearing.
 - At this point, Brace suggested the city solicitor's office should be required to provide a written statement as to the city's position for this appeal.

Motion made by Brace that the city submit a pre-hearing statement in accordance with Rule 3, Part 2 of the Civil Service Rules. Felton seconded. As a point of order, Mazin questioned if Rule 4 applies equally as well. After further discussion, the motion was amended by Brace that should the city NOT provide a pre-hearing statement, Rule 4 applies. Felton seconded the amendment; the motion to amend was passed unanimously (3-0) with Blount voting in the affirmative. The main motion – for the city to submit a pre-hearing statement as amended was passed (3-0) with Blount voting in the affirmative.

Process for reviewing test scores

- Hiba reported that the Board needs to look at having a process for candidates to review test scores. The question came about during the recent lieutenant exams for AFD. Hiba stated this process should be with the Board and not HR.
- Braced asked Hiba about the candidates reviewing the questions. It was noted that the test changes year to year and candidates would only be able to review the questions they got wrong. Hiba noted there has not been a process in place. Hiba also noted that by allowing a review of the tests, this process could mitigate grievances.
 - Jeremy Warmkessel notes that while no formal process is in place, HR has gone above and beyond in allowing questions to be reviewed by candidates asking to do so.
 - Chief Roca questioned the purpose of such a review if it doesn't alter the outcome of the scoring.
 - Stribula noted that due to major mathematical manual errors in the past, there is a perception of limited confidence in the final scoring. Stribula then said that is issue would be addressed in executive session.

New Business

Fire Department Report

A. Jon Steed – Appointment Date

- a. Hiba reported that Jon Steed passed the entire promotional test on December 2nd, and his date of promotion (provisional) should be moved to November 22, 2025; she explained this request is due to the results of the previous (November 2025) meeting and the vote the Board took then.

- i. Warmkessel noted that the Board can amend the rules but they do not become effective until after City Council approves them – he pointed to Civil Service Rules Chapter 19.
- ii. Stribula, Mazin and Warmkessel had a lengthy conversation of the action taken by the Board in November. Mazin pointed out that the Board acted on a one-sided presentation (by the City) and took action as an interpretation of the rules.
- iii. Warmkessel noted that the previous grievance the IAFF presented related to this matter had been settled and Steed was not adversely affected.

Motion was made by Brace to approve Steed’s seniority date of November 22, 2025; Felton seconded, motion passed 3-0, with Blount voting in the affirmative.

B. Fire Entry Exam List Approved

- a. Hiba handed out the score sheets to the Board members. She explained the process of the exam and matching the applicant list with the score results. All candidates were identified by ID number and not by name.
- b. 132 candidates out of 236 total applicants who tested passed the exam. Hiba went through the report provided by the vendor, McCann, reviewing the reasons for disqualification.
- c. Brace asked about the length of the contract with the vendor. Hiba explained it was for the one test only. The use of a third-party vendor took the liability away from the city, however she explained that there was still quite a bit of work for HR to do after the test (counting, sorting, etc) .
 - i. Brace noted concern that for the two candidates who were granted accommodation, the reader also became the proctor.
 - ii. Both Brace and Hiba state the need to further evaluate the process. Hiba suggested going out for more bids or an RFP in the future – with a clear cut scope of work.
 - iii. Stribula stated the Board will meet on December 12th for final approval of the list.

C. Posting of two (2) Promotional Exams

- a. Hiba reported the posting for the following positions:
 - i. Captain of Suppression
 - ii. Assistant Fire Chief (Prevention)

D. Applicant not Passing Part of Physical

- a. Hiba reported that an applicant did not pass his eye exam, according to DOT rules. However, it was noted if following NFPA guidelines, he could pass. She expressed concern about a conflict with DOT (the issue was his eyesight)
 - i. She told the Board she is bringing this up to make them aware as candidate is slotted for the January 2026 academy.

Police Department Report

A. Sergeant Testing

- a. Sribula jumped to the Lieutenant Promotional Exam, as the candidate for the exam had withdrawn.
 - i. Roca noted APD currently has two (2) Lieutenant positions open
 - ii. Sribula expressed concern that the testing process is not anticipating future events (retirements). He directed Steve to provide an update for Lieutenant testing at the next meeting.
 1. Sribula noted for the record the administrative functions are not limited solely to APD, AFD or HR – but when no one follows through it becomes problematic for the Board. He stressed the importance of being proactive.
- b. Sribula then moved back to the review of the Sergeant Promotional Testing Written Exam with Aspirant Consulting Group – this was moved to an executive session to follow.

Motion was made by Brace to accept the written Sergeant test as presented during executive session. Felton seconded. Motion passed (3-0), with Blount voting in the affirmative.

Adjournment : There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting Details : The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 2nd, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the 5th Floor Conference Room, City Hall, located at 435 Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA, 18101.

Minutes submitted by: Stella Oakman