



October 4TH, 2024 MINUTES for the
REGULAR MEETING OF
THE CITY OF ALLENTOWN CIVIL SERVICE BOARD
5TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM

Board Members in Attendance:

Walter Felton, Secretary
John S. Stribula Chairman
Maria Brace
Daniel Blount, Alternate Board Member

Staff in Attendance:

Dave Layton, Sgt. APD
Christian Williams, Deputy Chief AFD
Jim Gress, Assistant Chief, APD
Adam Rosenthal, Assistant City Solicitor
Manal Fares, HR Generalist
Christopher Mathews, APD

J. Wesneski, APD
Erik Landis, APD
Joshua Mazin, Board Solicitor
Steve Salloum, Human Resources
John Ferry, Human Res. Director
Hiba Khouri, Human Resources

Absent: Alternate Board member Hailey.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:06 a.m. by Chairman Stribula.

Roll Call

Secretary Felton called the Roll. With Stribula, Felton, Brace and Blount present, the board had a quorum.

The first order of business was administering the oath of office and swearing-in of new Board Member Maria Brace.

The Board welcomed new member Brace and asked those in attendance to introduce themselves. Board member Brace was then asked to provide a little background about herself, and also explained to those in attendance on how she learned of the time, place and frequency of the meetings. Brace

explained that notification only happened through attempts by the board to contact her. Brace further explained that she contacted Michaela Boyer by email in early September and did not receive a timely reply.

Minutes

Minutes of the previous regular meeting of September 6th, 2024 were presented and a motion was made by Brace, seconded by Felton to approve the minutes. Motion passed 4-0 (Blount alternate).

Chairman Stribula asked for and received unanimous consent to dispense with the order of business.

Sergeant's List

The first order of business was the unresolved Sergeant's exam.

Chairman Stribula gave a report on calculations and audit of the Sergeant's exam. 37 oral interviews were reviewed. Each interview consisted of 3 oral examiners. Each evaluator graded the 6 questions presented in addition to a general presentation evaluation. The 50 criteria were graded on a 0-1-2 scale.

Of the 37 candidates, 2 withdrew, and one candidate did not meet the evaluation passing threshold. Thus, 34 candidates were graded and ranked. In the November 2023 list to the June 2024 amended list there were 11 corrections. In the Boards review, there were 3 additional issues identified. One issue was a mathematical error that changed a score, but did not affect the ranking on the list. There was a question regarding the calculation of one examination and the issue of an incomplete evaluation. This incomplete examination concerned the 4th candidate on the list who, if a maximum grade would have been assigned to the incomplete evaluation would be tied for 3rd place. There is no information available to the board to discern how this omission was handled. Printed calculations of all the candidates were made available.

The Chairman also noted the spread of a candidates scores relative to all 3 evaluators, and how that 'spread' compared with all candidates. The example of 89, 79 and 59 was provided by the chairman which results in a spread of 40 points ($89-79=10$, $89-59=30$, $30+10 = 40$).

Unfinished Business

Staggered Board Terms

Chairman Stribula presented a letter prepared by Board Solicitor Mazin, sent to the Mayor, regarding the 3rd Class City Code/Home Rule Charter issue of staggered terms for Board members.

Board Secretary

There was a report from Acting Human Resources Director John Ferry as it regarded the restoration of a dedicated Board secretary. Ferry reported that the City had a candidate ready to fill the position, but that individual has since resigned.

Past Meeting Minutes and Records

John Ferry also reported on the Board's request as it regarded Archived/Past Board meeting minutes actions, reports and documents. Ferry stated that the Human Resources Department is gathering the documents, and the next step in the process is to retrieve available hard copy records in the records vault.

Human Resources Director

Ferry also reported that his 90-day temporary appointment is set to expire October 12th? and he is uncertain if or when a successor will be temporarily appointed.

Dedicated Board Email addresses

There was a discussion regarding City assigned emails for the Board. Board member Brace reported that she is familiar with other Government boards or commissions that the issue of emails and right to know requests presents problems for members who use personal email addresses for Board business. Chairman Stribula reported that the Board has been trying since May 2024 to get assigned email addresses by the City to avoid using personal email addresses. Brace stated she unwilling to use personal email for Board related business. Stribula stated that in months prior he has set up multiple addresses through Gmail to address the same concerns. Stribula reported that he uses ACSboard1@gmail.com and believes he has also setup the unused ACSboard2@gmail.com email address. In addition Stribula has created the ACSboardarchive@gmail.com.

City Solicitor Rosenthal stated he would look into the possibility of the City providing email addresses.

Minutes and Meeting postings

Gerald, of Information Technology addressed the Board and the issue of meeting notices and minutes being posted on the website. Gerald stated that posting requests normally go through the City Clerk. Stribula thanked Gerald for providing this information and indicated will notify the City Clerk of upcoming events.

Secretary assignment

Board member Brace returned to the discussion of the Board having a secretary as it has had in the past. There was a motion made by Brace, seconded by Felton, that in the event that the City does not assign a secretary to the board by October 31st 2024, that the Board proceed with amending its internal operation procedure rules to provide that the Board can hire its own secretary. Motion passed (3-0) with alternate Board member also voting in the affirmative.

New Business

Police Department Report

Sergeant Dave Layton gave a Police Officer Candidate Report. 53 individuals are on the current list. The Police department is down to number 43. Layton expects to exhaust the list and the process of establishing the next list has begun and November 9th and 10th the department will conduct the written exam and the agility portion of testing. The APD is expecting to present a new list in the first meeting in January 2025.

Fire Department Report

Christian Williams reported on the status of various promotional exams and their exhaustion. Williams stated that he has test interview questions when we go into executive session later in the meeting. Williams stated the Department is moving forward with testing the next 20 candidates for the physical agility. Practice sessions will be held October 16th, with actual testing being held the next day. (October 17th). Hiring of new recruits is expected at the end January 2025. Williams further reported that the Department is finally getting a 2nd Deputy Chief in administration. In the past there has been a 2nd on the books, but never fully funded. The individual will assume the Emergency Management Coordinator duties as well as other Fire Department duties. Williams stated the promotion will take place on the following Wednesday, and that money is left for the year due to the unused EMC monies.

The following promotions were reported:

Jonathon Flissar promoted to Lieutenant August 17, 2024

Theodore Maguire was promoted to Captain effective August 17, 2024.

James Boyle was promoted to Battalion Chief effective August 3, 2024.

Service Credit Purchase

2024 Act 49 provides for purchase of Service credit for prior Police Department time.

Human Resources presented a question regarding the Police and Fire Civil service promotional rules, specifically Rule 1 as it relates to Mayor notifying the board of a vacancy and a list established. Solicitor Mazin stated that Rule I needs to be reviewed alongside Rule VI. In essence, the promotional list is established by Rule VI and the Rule I is in reference to that. There was a discussion that the City does not follow Rule VI section b in that the City does not ask the Board to certify the list of 3 eligible's. Board member Brace expressed dissatisfaction in that the City has not followed this provision that it could open the Board and the City to litigation. With the number of hiring and promotions there was a discussion on the application of this rule, and whether the Board could effect these lists by Zoom.

Brace stated that in the future the City should consult the Board within the provisions of the rule before making the promotion.

Subpoenas

President Stribula reported that at the September Board meeting the Board made 2 motions for 2 separate Subpoenas and another motion that in the event that the City did not satisfy the motion, that the Board proceed to the Court of Common Pleas.

There was a motion by Brace, seconded by Felton to affirm the September motion to proceed to the Court of Common Pleas in the event that the City did not satisfy the two underlying motions/subpoenas. Motion carried (3-0) with alternate Blount also voting in the affirmative.

The Board went into executive session to review oral questions for the Police and the Fire Departments. Upon returning from executive session, the following motions were made:

Fire: Captain of Suppression, Battalion Chief, Fire Marshal, and Lieutenant.

The board approved the questions by Motion made by Brace, seconded by Felton and passed (3-0) with alternate Board member Blount also voting in the affirmative.

Police: Assistant Chief Oral questions were also presented and approved by a motion made by Brace, seconded by Felton and passed (3-0) with alternate Board member Blount also voting in the affirmative.

The motions were made with the proviso that the Department creates a rubric for the questions.

A Motion was also made to approve the oral examiner for the APD Assistant Chief interview. Motion made by Brace, seconded by Felton and passed (3-0) with alternate Blount also voting in the affirmative.

Adjournment

Motion made to adjourn by Brace, seconded by Felton and passed (3-0) with alternate Blount also voting in the affirmative.

Meeting adjourned 12:00 P.M.

Next Meeting Details

The next meeting is scheduled for 9:00 A.M., Friday, November 1, 2024, in the 5th Floor Conference Room, City Hall, located at 435 Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA, 18101.

Submitted,

Walter Felton, Secretary