

MINUTES OF MEETING
AVON CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
Held Monday, May 1, 2023

AVON CITY HALL

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by Peter Kratt, Chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Peter Kratt, Commissioner Bill Greaney and
Commissioner Alan Wojciechowski

In attendance: Police Chief Fischbach, Fire Chief Swope and Recording Secretary Rose
Seighman

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

Mr. Kratt asked if there were any additions or deletions to today's agenda, there were none.

APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING OF 4/5/2023:

Mr. Wojciechowski made a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting of 4/5/2023. Mr. Greaney seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

ACTION ITEMS:

- *To consider approval of Police Entrance Exam*

Chief Fischbach reiterated that as he's mentioned in previous meetings, they are going through their current Entrance Exam List very quickly. They are now up to candidate #49 on this list. That list was certified July 18, 2022, so it will be one year old this July and he doesn't believe there will be any candidates left on the list at that time. Typically, he would ask the Commission to extend that list for another year, but he won't be doing that this time. In July, he will ask that the list be abolished. At that point, we will need a new entry level list. He and Rose have discussed this and contacted the National Testing Network regarding a new exam. We have used NTN for the last 3 or 4 entry level exams. He believes this is the best option to get the most candidates possible. Last year, the exam was open for one month, which is traditional. But he would like to have this exam open for a longer period of time to give people the ability to get their test scores in. His request would be to use NTN for the exam and have it open from June 1st through July 24th and at that point, we would close the window for accepting test scores.

Mr. Greaney made a motion to approve the Police Entrance Exam using the National Testing Network, Mr. Wojciechowski seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

- *Update on Fire Lieutenant Promotional exam*

Chief Swope shared that the written portion of this exam was given a few weeks ago and this past Saturday, the Assessment portion of the exam was given. The feedback he has gotten has been positive. The candidates don't know their results yet, but they felt the questions were fair and the Assessors were fair. There were 11 candidates taking this exam and with that number, they had to structure the Assessment differently than when there were only 6 candidates. They were being assessed on their command presence and knowledge of policy and procedures. They also had to answer as to how they would respond in certain scenarios regarding EMS and Fire. He is expecting to get the results in about a week. Chief Swope is asking the Commission to have a special meeting in a couple of weeks in order to certify this new list. He said Rose will need about a week to get the seniority points calculated with their scores and put them in rank order. He is asking if May 15th would work for the next meeting. Mr. Kratt asked if that would give everyone enough time and Rose said it would be plenty of time to get the list in order.

Mr. Greaney asked if the candidates were ranked after the written portion. Chief Swope said they were not. He explained that the candidates didn't know their scores on the written exam, but they were told if they passed or failed. All 11 candidates passed so they all participated in the Assessment. After the Assessment they will be ranked. The candidates had the opportunity after the written exam to check their test sheet against the answer key and about half of them did that.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Mr. Greaney asked Chief Fischbach if he received any more applications on the Lateral List. Chief Fischbach said they had two more applications, however, they did not meet the minimum requirements of two years of full time service. He said they have rejected about five or six applications because they did not meet the minimum requirements. He has been reaching out to those candidates to let them know we will probably be having an entry level test in the spring/summer so they can apply that way. Chief said they are actively working off the Entrance list from the test that was given last summer. They have a candidate they are bringing in for an interview this week. Chief Fischbach has five full time positions to fill. He is meeting with a candidate from the Lateral List tomorrow and will be giving him a conditional offer. He has a couple of other candidates they are working with now, from both the Entrance and Lateral Lists. They are doing the background vetting process on them. The Lateral List has given them 25 candidates to look at that they did not have before. The Lateral List is not a fix all but has given them more options. Mr. Kratt said that it appears the Chief is comfortable with using both the Lateral and Entrance List approach to hiring. Chief said that is correct. The Lateral list is great because those candidates have already been vetted and through the process, they were hired by another agency. But that also means they have some years in. That's why it's good to have brand new officers as well that are right out of the Academy with no experience, they are young. The Lateral officers already have time in, so they won't be spending as many years with Avon. The young, new officers have more years to spend in Avon. That's why it's good to have a blend of both of those, veteran officers and new officers. Mr. Greaney asked if there will be any retirements in the next several months. Chief answered there are none that he is aware of. He explained that he does have a number of officers that are in that window where they are able to retire. The DROP program is an option that many officers take advantage of and once you enter DROP, you essentially freeze your retirement at that point and you start contributing to a deferred retirement plan. We do not have an age limit or a forced retirement for our officers. But if they decide on the DROP program, it is mandatory that they retire eight years from when they enter the program. He believes he has five officers that are in the DROP program. Those officers can come in tomorrow and tell the Chief they are retiring but he is not aware of any that plan on leaving.

Mr. Kratt said with the growth of the city of Avon, do you see a need for increasing the number of officers? Chief said that he asked for and was authorized to hire two additional officers this year. Of the five officers he is authorized to hire this year, three are replacements and two are additional officers they are adding to the department, which puts them at 50 officers. He believes that is a comfortable place to be. The commercial businesses that come to the city are not a huge tax on the police force, the residential side is a bigger tax on the department. But when you talk about commercial retail, etc., that does affect the department. The city administration has worked well with the department to make sure they have what they need to respond accordingly. Mr. Wojciechowski asked if there is an age requirement for retirement. Chief answered there is no age requirement, as long as they meet the minimum requirements and are physically able to do the job. Mr. Wojciechowski asked about partial retirements. Chief said that technically you could get a partial retirement. There are minimum requirements to get to any pension. If you want your full pension, then you have to meet minimum age and minimum years. The age cap is debatable. Some cities have that, we do not. He isn't sure you would want to be in your 40s and start a career in law enforcement, it is a young man's job for sure. But we don't have an age cap. Most of our candidates are in their 20s and 30s. Putting an age cap is something we can think about it, but it hasn't been an issue so far. Mr. Wojciechowski said someone could have had 20 years in the military and then come out and be an officer. Chief said that is exactly right, which is why having an age cap would limit the viable candidates out there.

Mr. Wojciechowski asked about officers being required to take a physical. Chief explained that there is an entrance level physical agility test. It is called the Cooper Standard and it's a scale based on male/female and age. Not every candidate has to do the same, it is "flexed" based on age and male/female. Mr. Wojciechowski asked if current officers have to take physicals. Chief answered we do not have a mandatory annual physical, but we have a voluntary physical agility that they can take. Most officers do take it, but it is not mandatory. He said if he felt an officer was unable to perform their job duties, based on the job description, he has the ability to send them for a fitness of duty test, which could involve a medical, physical and/or psychological exam. It is on a case-by-case basis, if a problem arises.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Monday, May 15, 2023, at 10:00am

ADJOURN:

Following a unanimous vote, today's meeting was adjourned at 10:15 A.M.

PASSED: _____ **SIGNED BY:** _____

Peter Kratt, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Rose Seighman, Recording Secretary

- C: John Gasior
- Safety Director Duane Streator
- Chief Fischbach
- Chief Swope
- Rose Seighman