



MICHIGAN CITY FIRE MERIT COMMISSION

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MICHAEL NEULIEB, VICE PRESIDENT
FRED ADRIAN, COMMISSIONER
GREG DEUTSCHER, COMMISSIONER
DOUG BIEGE, COMMISSIONER

Michigan City Fire Merit Commission Meeting Minutes: January 3rd, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm by Vice President Neulieb. All in attendance were asked to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Those in attendance were Vice President Neulieb, Commissioner Adrian, Commissioner Biege, and Commissioner Deutscher. Also present were Mayor Parry, Commission Attorney Cory Shoffner, Union President Barrett Taylor, and Fire Chief Doug Legault.

Approval of Minutes- A motion to approve December's regular meeting minutes was made by Commissioner Deutscher, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Adrian. **Motion carried 4-0.**

A motion to approve the minutes from the executive session on December 5th, 2022, was made by Commissioner Deutscher. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Adrian. **Motion carried 4-0.**

Report from City Council Representative- No report.

Report from Commission Attorney- No report.

Report from Union Local 475- A brief conversation occurred regarding whether an individual may ask to attend a Fire Merit Commission meeting, to which Chief Legault noted that it shouldn't be an issue if that individual is granted permission due to the meetings being held on Fire Department property and the fact that the regular meetings are considered open, public meetings.

Report from Fire Chief Doug Legault- Chief Legault welcomed Commissioner Biege to the board, stating that he was looking forward to working with him.

The call reports for December are as follows:

- 363 calls, of those calls:
- 9 fires

- 283 rescues/medical calls
- 7 hazardous condition calls
- 14 service calls
- 45 good intent calls
- 4 false calls
- 1 special incident call

January Department Anniversaries:

Firefighter Christopher Gaines – 2 years

Chief Legault also announced the retirement of Driver/Operator Chris Hartsburg, thanking him for his service to the citizens of Michigan City and his dedication to the Michigan City Fire Department. He then requested that, due to current and upcoming retirements, a motion be made to contact the next 4 people on the hiring list. The motion to use the next 4 names on the hiring list was made by Commissioner Deutscher and seconded by Commissioner Adrian.

Motion carried 4-0.

Chief Legault then asked that the commission check the hiring list to see how many names were left. Vice President Neulieb and Chief Legault noted that since there are only 3 names left on the list, a new hiring process would need to begin soon.

A request was made by Chief Legault that a series of meetings be set up to discuss the changes to the merit ordinance; discussion ensues.

Old Business- Vice President Neulieb briefly discusses the election of officers for the February meeting.

New Business- Vice President Neulieb noted that he was informed of a firefighter testing positive on their drug test, to which Chief Legault had given them 5 days off. A discussion involving the entire commission, including Chief Legault and Ms. Shoffner, took place regarding flaws within the testing process- communication, random selection, etc. Mayor Parry recognized that the city has issues with the drug testing process, making a point to the commission that those within the higher ranks of the city are fully aware of the issues already. A motion was made by Commissioner Deutscher to approve the 25-day suspension, it was then seconded by Commissioner Adrian. **Motion carried 3-1.**

Commissioner Deutscher made note that, as city employees, he believes the commissioners should have email addresses through the city to which Vice President Neulieb agreed, stating that the city attorney would be looking into it. A motion to request city-issued email addresses for the commissioners was made by Commissioner Deutscher. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Adrian. **Motion carried 4-0.**

Public Comment- In response to the events that occurred in Cincinnati in the past week and with the Play for Jake Foundation in mind, Tommy Kulavik suggested that all Fire Department vehicles should be equipped with fully functional AEDs. Chief Legault stated that all engines, beach rescue and Car 10 are already equipped, but his and the other chiefs' cars are not nor are the individual trucks at the stations.

Discussion ensues once more regarding drug testing, covering multiple aspects of the issue with emphasis on the flaws within the process and how it was originally handled.

Commission Comment- No comment.

With no other business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Deutscher. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Adrian at 5:49pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 6th, 2023, at 5:00pm.