



MICHIGAN CITY FIRE MERIT COMMISSION

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MICHIGAN CITY, INDIANA 46360
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ROBERT POLLOCK, COMMISSIONER
GREG DEUTSCHER, COMMISSIONER
MICHAEL NEULIEB, COMMISSIONER
ANDREW SPERLING, COMMISSIONER

Michigan City Fire Merit Commission Meeting Minutes: February 7, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 5:00pm by Commissioner Pollock. At this time, all in attendance were called to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. A quorum was noted with Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Neulieb, and Commissioner Sperling were all in attendance. Commissioner Deutscher was absent. Also in attendance were commission attorney Corey Shoffner, as well as members from City Council, and Fire Chief Doug Legault. Commissioner decides to hold off on election of officers until there are enough individuals present. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Approval of Minutes- Commissioner Neulieb makes a motion to approve the minutes from the December 2021 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sperling. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Communications/Claims- Commissioner Pollock discusses the payroll for Ms. Shoffner, to which Commissioner Sperling makes a motion to approve the payments for both January and February of 2022. Commissioner Pollock seconded the motion. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Commissioner Sperling makes a motion to approve the commission payroll for all commissioners for the month of January. Commissioner Neulieb seconded the motion. **Motion carried 3-0.**

With not much to report regarding the budget report, Commissioner Pollock briefly discusses payments.

Report from City Council Representative- No report.

Report from Commission Attorney- No report.

Report from Union Local 475- Union President Barrett Taylor brings up the topic of promotional testing, asking general questions regarding what to study, what the materials will

be, and so on. Commissioner Pollock mentions that the commission will come together to discuss this. Discussion ensues regarding the promotional testing.

President Taylor then mentions that it was brought to his attention that individuals want to make changes to the Fire Merit ordinance.; discussion ensues regarding the topic at hand.

Report from Fire Chief Doug Legault- On behalf of the Michigan City Fire Department, Chief Legault thanks former commissioners Ricky Jackson and Charles Williams for their years of service as well as welcome Andrew Sperling to the commission.

Chief Legault congratulates Lieutenant Brad Kreighbaum and Driver/Operator Eugene Hanas on their promotions to their respective roles, which was approved back in December.

Department anniversaries for January:

Firefighter Christopher Gaines 1 year

Department anniversaries for February:

Captain Randy Dibble	35 years
Captain David Nespo	33 years
Operator Alan Kreighbaum	31 years
Captain Christopher Kosakowski	30 years
Firefighter Brandon White	12 years
Driver/Operator Eugene Hanas	5 years
Firefighter David Rinconeno	4 years
Driver/Operator Jacob Irvin	4 years
Firefighter Chris Zibutis	4 years
Driver/Operator Chris Milcarek	4 years
Firefighter Kyle Gish	4 years
Firefighter Logan Kaletha	2 years

Chief Legault states that he received two letters, the first being from Captain Rob Steinborn and Captain Andrew Knouse. On Friday, December 10th, Engine 1 was dispatched for a 1050 car on fire with people trapped inside. Firefighter Zibutis and Firefighter Doperalski were ordered to put out the fire. Engine 1 captain and Firefighter Zibutis made entry into the car, noting that no one was in the car. Police directed the fire department to another car that was heavily damaged, with the driver being unconscious but breathing, and the passenger was conscious and alert with some facial trauma. Operator Matthew Miller, Operator Lemon Kelley, and Firefighter Jory Palmer performed an extrication. The incident went smoothly and the individuals on the Fire Department remained calm despite a stressful environment. Tower 1 crew made entry into the house that was involved in the crash. It was determined that four vehicles were damaged in the crash, as well as the house. In this letter, Captain Steinborn and

Captain Knouse requested that those individuals involved in the incident receive recognition for their professionalism. The individuals are as follows:

Battalion Chief Mike Orzech
Captain Rob Steinborn
Operator Shannon Borders
Firefighter Chris Zibutis
Firefighter Logan Doperalski
Captain Andrew Knouse
Operator Lemon Kelley
Firefighter Jory Palmer
Lieutenant Judd Rose
Lieutenant Barrett Taylor
Operator Matthew Miller

The second letter is from an incident on January 29th regarding an unconscious patient with CPR in progress. Firefighter David Rinconeno and Firefighter Randall Hallett entered and found the patient on the floor. Upon inspection, Firefighter Hallett found that the patient had a pulse and then administered Narcan. At this time, Captain Christopher Kosakowski discovered another unconscious individual on the porch who looked pale. Narcan was administered to this patient as well. Driver/Operator Brandon Lee assisted EMS with getting into the home. At this time, another dose of Narcan was administered by EMS. The second ambulance arrived and was assisted by Driver/Operator Lee.

At approximately 20:15 hours, another call came from the same address. A patient was lethargic and uncooperative. After several minutes, Firefighter Hallett was able to get vitals and administered Narcan while Captain Kosakowski questioned the occupants regarding drug use; a few of the occupants were experiencing mild symptoms. Firefighter Rinconeno administered doses to two separate patients. He and Firefighter Hallett assisted the EMS. The letter, written by Captain Kosakowski, requested that the following department members receive recognition for their professionalism and their part in assisting EMS:

Driver/Operator Brandon Lee
Firefighter David Rinconeno
Firefighter Randall Hallett

Chief Legault added Captain Christopher Kosakowski to this list as well.

Commissioner Pollock questions Chief Legault regarding HIPAA laws, to which Chief Legault mentioned that that was the reasoning as to why so much of the incident was cut out of the story.

As of January 1st, 2022, Chief Legault was given permission to add a second Deputy Chief. He then appointed then Captain Mike Jasnieski to the role of Deputy Chief. Chief Legault asked for

the commission to make a motion to promote the captain, lieutenant, and driver/operator from the promotional list. Commissioner Sperling made a motion to fill the aforementioned roles on the promotional list. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neulieb. **Motion carried 3-0.**

As of January 11th, 2022, Firefighter Christopher Gaines has met the requirements to be promoted to first-class firefighter. Chief Legault also congratulates Firefighter Gaines on being Valedictorian of his academy class. He then asks that the commission makes a motion to remove Firefighter Gaines from the probationary list. Commissioner Neulieb made a motion to promote Firefighter Gaines from probationary firefighter to first-class firefighter. Commissioner Sperling seconded the motion. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Old Business- Discussion ensues regarding President Taylor's previous conversation about the commission ordinance as well as promotional testing.

Chief Legault discusses the new hire testing process, as well as possibly adopting the City's drug policy. Commissioner Pollock states that he agrees, whilst Commissioner Neulieb states that the commission should not adopt the policy and that the City should have to handle this, not the Fire Merit Commission. Discussion ensues regarding the drug policy and the ordinance.

New Business- Commissioner Pollock mentions that there is a stark difference between the number of applications from the previous academic and physical agility tests to the upcoming ones. He proposed that department and commission individuals go to job and career fairs. He also discusses possibly bringing in 18-year-olds like what Valparaiso and South Bend are currently doing. Commissioner Neulieb asks President Taylor the starting pay for probationary firefighters, to which President Taylor states that he will need to verify that information. Discussion ensues regarding the starting pay for both probationary and first-class firefighters.

With there being only 11 complete applications for the department, Commissioner Neulieb made a motion to have the commission open the application process until April 15th, 2022, as well as moving the testing to sometime in June. Commissioner Sperling seconded the motion. **Motion carried 3-0.**

Discussion about the application and hiring process continues.

Public Comment- Discussion once again ensues regarding the drug policy.

Commission Comment- No report.

With no other business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Sperling. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neulieb at 5:58PM.

Next meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 7th, 2022 at 5:00pm.