

**VILLAGE OF WESTERN SPRINGS
BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
June 23, 2021**

Present: Chair Marcia Buell; Commissioner James Maragos; Commissioner Janet Dahl; Brian Budds, Director of Law Enforcement Services; Ingrid Velkme, Village Manager; Michael Jurusik, Village Attorney; Susan Depner, Law Enforcement Services

Absent: Mike Kelly, Director of Fire and EMS; Ellen Baer, Director of Administrative Services

Agenda Items:

1. Call to Order

Chair Buell called the meeting to order at 7:03 a.m.

2. Roll Call

Chair Marcia Buell, Commissioner James Maragos, and Commissioner Janet Dahl were present. Also present were Brian Budds, Chief of Police, Ingrid Velkme, Village Manager, Michael Jurusik, Village Attorney, and Susan Depner, Police Department Administrative Services Coordinator.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2021

MOTION: Commissioner Maragos made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 14, 2021 meeting. Commissioner Dahl seconded the motion. All present were in favor and the motion was approved by voice vote.

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Proposed Amendments to Current BFPC Rules

Chief Budds referenced Village Attorney Jurusik's memo included in the meeting packet, which summarizes the proposed changes to the BFPC rules. He explained that we are considering these changes due to the difficulty in recruiting and retaining employees, combined with the difficulty of getting newly hired officers into a police academy due to the backlog caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first proposed change the Chief discussed is changing the minimum education requirement from a Bachelor's degree to the completion of 60 hours of college level coursework from an accredited college or university. One major reason for this change is the desire to diversify our police force. Being able to recruit from the Chicago junior colleges may lead to greater diversity in hiring. Changing the education requirement will lead to a bigger pool of candidates. Chief Budds pointed out that having a Bachelor's

degrees will earn a candidate five preference points on the application and that we can encourage any new hires without a Bachelor's degree to take advantage of our educational expense reimbursement to earn a Bachelor's degree. However, in response to a question from Commissioner Maragos, we could not require a new hire to earn a Bachelor's degree, as this is governed by the collective bargaining agreement and would have to be negotiated, as would Commissioner Maragos' suggestion that officers who earn a Bachelor's degree receive a pay increase.

The second proposed change the Chief discussed is implementing a lateral hire process. This would be another option in hiring, as we would be legally required to also maintain the entry-level eligibility list. The process for the lateral list would be separate from the process for the entry-level list. We would announce that we are taking applications for a lateral list. The requirements would be: An officer currently in good standing with a police department, at least two years of experience, and certified. We would be willing to waive the education requirement for lateral candidates.

The Chief says we could manage the application process ourselves, so I/O Solutions would not have to be involved. The application process would involve background checks, psychological exams, and medical exams the same as the entry-level process. Candidates would go through oral interviews and written exercises. The oral interviews would be conducted by the BFPC, but the Chief would sit in on the interviews. A system of standardized scoring would need to be implemented and each candidate would be scored and ranked and then would be hired off the list according to their ranking. There would be no preference points for the lateral list. The BFPC could then choose a candidate off either list.

The lateral list would not be a two-year list as the entry-level list is; however, a candidate cannot stay on the list for more than two years, but would have to reapply. In response to a question from Commissioner Dahl, the Chief said that blueline.com is the site where we would post the announcement for the lateral list, as well as our own website.

Those hired from the lateral list would still be on probation for 18 months and would still go through field training, but would not have to attend a police academy or take a Power Test. Also, once off probation, officers hired from the lateral list would go to step B of the pay scale.

The Chief explained the three-year agreement that new hires from the entry-level list agree to at the time of application, in which they have to pay back to the Village certain amounts spent on the officer if they leave before three years from hire. He said this agreement would also apply to the lateral list and would be a way to get candidates who want to be here. In response to questions from Commissioners Maragos and Dahl, Chief Budds and Village Manager Velkme said that our pay is competitive with other communities and we are CALEA accredited and a good community. Chief Budds said that when officers leave here to work for a different police department, it is normally because of our small size – that officers go to larger departments with more opportunities or more action. The Chief expects the lateral list we implement would attract officers with 2-3 years' experience. Greater years of service means they may have to take a lesser salary based on starting at Step B after probation.

The Chief explained that legally a notice of the rule changes must be posted in a newspaper and that we would not be able to announce a lateral hiring process until 10

calendar days after the notice is published. He explained that the entry-level list is still active, but that we are on the last person on the list, and the process of creating a new entry-level list will begin most likely in the early fall.

The final proposed change the Chief discussed is clean-up language in the promotion section of the rules. The change would add the term "assessment center" to the language.

MOTION: Commissioner Dahl made a motion to approve the recommended changes to the rules of the Board of Fire and Police Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Maragos. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

6. Other Business

Chief Budds reiterated that the current entry-level list is still active, but we are on the last person on the list. We are currently doing a background check on that candidate. He explained how we got to the last person on the list, with the other candidates after Roger Wilson, who is currently attending PTI, declining the process because they were hired elsewhere or are no longer interested in working in the profession.

7. Adjournment

MOTION: Commissioner Maragos made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Commissioner Dahl seconded the motion. The motion passed by a unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:06 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Depner
Administrative Services Coordinator