

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION MINUTES
March 24, 2021

The meeting of the Civil Service Commission was called to order at 5:00 p.m. at the Seward Civic Center, 616 Bradford St., Seward by Mike Hecker in absence of Chairman Corey Gray. Commission Members present meeting were: Brad Bowen, Von Thomas, Stacy Parr, Mike Hecker. Corey Gray entered the meeting at 5:37 p.m. Mike Hecker left the meeting at 5:43 p.m. Other officials present throughout the meeting were: Chief of Police Brian Peters, and Secretary/Chief Examiner Bonnie Otte recording the minutes. Absent: None.

Hecker announced that a copy of the Agenda for this meeting is posted at the entrance of the meeting room along with a copy of the Open Meetings Act for public inspection.

1. POLICE CAPTAIN AND POLICE SERGEANT POSITIONS

Chief of Police Brian Peters stated that following his promotion to Chief of Police, the City reviewed and updated job descriptions for the Police Sergeant and Assistant Chief of Police. There was an approved title change from Assistant Chief of Police to Police Captain. There were no changes to the pay lines. The department is now ready to fill the positions. Chief Peters stated there is Council approval and budgetary authority for twelve sworn positions. They are currently down one sworn position. Depending on whether the Captain and Sergeant positions are filled internally or externally will determine whether there will be one or two openings for Sergeant, and potentially, for a Police Officer.

He stated there is currently one person within the department who meets the qualifications for the Captain position. There are at least five current officers within the department who meet the qualifications for the Sergeant position.

Chief Peters stated, City legal counsel has provided the opinion that the City needs to open up the hiring process to allow for internal as well as external applicants to apply for the positions.

Chief Peters stated that the City has used IPMA as the testing company for entry-level and promotional written exams. The last time a promotional process was needed was ten years ago. IPMA no longer offers a written promotional test. He stated he has found a couple other companies that offer a standardized written exam; however, he is not familiar with their process and whether their questions will be applicable to the City of Seward's department and beneficial in a promotional process. He added that the written exams require a minimum of 45-60 days of study time, which adds to the time without a full-compliment department.

Chief Peters stated he has reached out to Morrow & Associates out of Omaha, which offers a process in lieu of the former standardized written exam.

Britteny Ferrin, Morrow & Associates, 16707 Q St, #2, Omaha, NE 68135, introduced herself and provided a brief background for her professional services. She stated she is the owner and sole employee of the company and has worked for the company for approximately 24 years, with the last 15 as owner. She stated she works mainly in the Omaha metro area assisting in entry-level through promotional levels for both law enforcement and fire

positions.

Ms. Ferrin explained that the process reviewed with Chief Peters for the Sergeant eligibility list includes an oral interview before a panel of professional law enforcement command personnel from other agencies who score the interview. The scoring is based on a 100-point system. She would provide a ranked list of all applicants who participated in the interview to the Civil Service Commission to conduct their additional oral interview. She stated this is not a pass/fail oral exam.

The Captain process would be similar; however, there would be an additional written essay for all participants. The essay would also be scored by a panel of law enforcement command professionals. This will be a two-day process with the oral interview one day and the written essay the second day. The average score of the oral and essay exams would be forwarded to the Civil Service Commission to conduct their oral interviews. The Civil Service can set a limit to the number they choose to interview, i.e. top 10, etc.

Ms. Ferrin stated that the structured questions for both the oral and written essay have been validated and have never been challenged. She stated the City could choose from her bank of questions or if there are questions of particular interest to the City of Seward, those can be incorporated.

She stated she recommends the interviews to be no less than 30 minutes and preferably 45-60 minutes for each applicant. She said that detail can be worked through after there is a count of the number of applicants who apply.

Chief Peters stated he would like to run the two recruitment processes (Captain and Sergeant) at the same time.

Motion by Parr, second by Bowen, that the requested use of Morrow and Associates to assist with the promotional process for the current recruiting cycle to establish an eligibility list for the positions of Captain and Sergeant, in lieu of a standardized written exam, be approved.

Aye: Thomas, Bowen, Parr, Gray
Nay: None.
Absent: Hecker. Motion carried.

Motion by Bowen, seconded by Gray to accept the oral question for Police Sergeant and Police Captain as presented.

Aye: Thomas, Bowen, Parr, Gray
Nay: None.
Absent: Hecker. Motion carried.

2. ELIGIBILITY LIST

Police Chief Peters stated there is no current list for the Sergeant or Captain positions. Depending on potential promotions could open up a need for Police Officer II and I. Mayor Eickmeier has authorized the process for filling all of these positions. No action taken.

3. ESTABLISH WRITTEN TEST AND ORAL EXAMINATION DATE(S)

Motion by Gray, seconded by Parr that the week of May 17 through 21, 2021 be set as the tentative timeframe for the oral interviews for Police

Captain.

Aye: Thomas, Bowen, Parr, Gray

Nay: None.

Absent: Hecker. Motion carried.

Motion by Gray, seconded by Parr that the week of May 24 through 28, 2021 be set as the tentative timeframe for the oral interviews for Police Sergeant.

Aye: Thomas, Bowen, Parr, Gray

Nay: None.

Absent: Hecker. Motion carried.

4. ESTABLISH LIMIT TO NUMBER OF APPLICANTS TO GO TO ORAL INTERVIEW

Motion by Bowen, seconded by Parr that the Civil Service Commission limit the oral interviews to the top eight scoring applicants from the Morrow and Associates process for the Police Captain eligibility list and limit the oral interviews to the top eight scoring applicants from the Morrow and Associates process for the Police Sergeant eligibility list.

Aye: Thomas, Bowen, Parr, Gray

Nay: None.

Absent: Hecker. Motion carried.

5. REPORT FROM CHIEF OF POLICE ON DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES

Chief of Police Peters reported that Officer Waldron is currently deployed until the end of the year, Officer Garcia is out on leave with a new baby, and they are monitoring LB51 which could greatly affect the department budget as it would double the required number of training hours.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Bowen, seconded by Parr, to approve the following consent agenda:

- a. Minutes of July 23, 2020 meeting
- b. Minutes of August 20, 2020 meeting

Aye: Thomas, Bowen, Parr, Gray

Nay: None.

Absent: Hecker. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

Motion by Bowen, seconded by Thomas to adjourn the March 24, 2021 Civil Service Commission meeting.

Aye: Thomas, Bowen, Parr, Gray

Nay: None.

Absent: Hecker. Motion carried.

Bonnie Otte
Civil Service Commission Secretary