



MINUTES OF THE POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2023, 3:00 PM

In person at City Hall, Room 310.

Virtual attendance also available via Zoom.

A. ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION.

I. This item contains Zoom information, instructions, and a link to the Virtual Comment Form.

B. ROLL CALL.

Present: Rod Goldhahn, Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rashad Cobb, John Laux

Excused: Ed Dorff

Others present: Police Chief Chris Davis, Fire Chief Matthew Knott, HR Manager Melanie Falk, HR Generalist Jen Smits and others.

C. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA.

President Goldhahn noted that there would be no Fire Fighter interviews because one candidate withdrew and one candidate broke his leg. Moved by Commissioner Rashad Cobb, seconded by Commissioner Marian Boyle-Rohloff to approve. Motion carried.

Yes- Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rod Goldhahn, Rashad Cobb, John Laux, No- None, Abstain- None

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

I. Approval of the minutes from the special meeting held November 30, 2022 and the regular meeting held December 1, 2022.

Moved by Commissioner John Laux, seconded by Commissioner Marian Boyle-Rohloff to approve. Motion carried.

Yes- Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rod Goldhahn, Rashad Cobb, John Laux, No- None, Abstain- None

E. INFORMATIONAL.

1. President's Report.

President Goldhahn commented on the nice retirement ceremony and sendoff for Chief Litton following his 10 years with the City.

2. Report from the Chiefs.

Police Chief Chris Davis and Fire Chief Matthew Knott reported on their respective department events and activities.

3. Police Department Commander Promotional Process.

Moved by Commissioner John Laux, seconded by Commissioner Rashad Cobb to approve. Motion carried.

Yes- Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rod Goldhahn, Rashad Cobb, John Laux, No- None, Abstain- None

F. REGULAR BUSINESS.

1. Consideration with possible action on the following communications:

a. Budget Status Report.

Moved by Commissioner Marian Boyle-Rohloff, seconded by Commissioner Rashad Cobb to receive and place on file the budget status report and the budget spreadsheet. Motion carried.

Yes- Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rod Goldhahn, Rashad Cobb, John Laux, No- None, Abstain- None

b. Budget Spreadsheet.

2. Consideration with possible action on request to approve the monthly bills.

Moved by Commissioner Rashad Cobb, seconded by Commissioner Marian Boyle-Rohloff to approve. Motion carried.

Yes- Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rod Goldhahn, Rashad Cobb, John Laux, No- None, Abstain- None

3. Consideration with possible action on request for promotion to the rank of Police Sergeant.

The Commission may convene in closed session pursuant to Sections 19.85(1) (c) and (f), Wisconsin Statutes, to consider employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercise responsibility. The Commission may thereafter reconvene in open session pursuant to Section 19.85(2), Wisconsin Statutes, to report the results of the closed session and consider the balance of the agenda.

Moved by Commissioner John Laux, seconded by Commissioner Marian Boyle-Rohloff to go into closed session for items #3 and #4. Motion carried.

Yes- Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rod Goldhahn, Rashad Cobb, John Laux, No- None, Abstain- None

Moved by Commissioner Marian Boyle-Rohloff, seconded by Commissioner John Laux to return to regular order of business. Motion carried.

Yes- Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rod Goldhahn, Rashad Cobb, John Laux, No- None, Abstain- None

Out of closed session, President Goldhahn reported that the Commission approved the request for promotions of Riley Peterson to Sergeant and Kristopher Thoreson to Lieutenant.

Moved by Commissioner Rashad Cobb, seconded by Commissioner John Laux to approve. Motion carried.

Yes- Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rod Goldhahn, Rashad Cobb, John Laux, No- None, Abstain- None

4. Consideration with possible action on request for promotion to the rank of Police Lieutenant.

The Commission may convene in closed session pursuant to Sections 19.85(1) (c) and (f), Wisconsin Statutes, to consider employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercise responsibility. The Commission may thereafter reconvene in open session pursuant to Section 19.85(2), Wisconsin Statutes, to report the results of the closed session and consider the balance of the agenda.

5. Interviews with Fire Fighter candidate(s). Please take notice that pursuant to §19.85 (1) (c) and (f) Wisconsin Statutes, the Commission may convene in closed session for the purpose of interviewing, evaluating and considering employment of Fire Fighter candidates.

There were no Fire Fighter interviews.

G. PUBLIC HEARINGS.

H. ADJOURNMENT.

Moved by Commissioner Marian Boyle-Rohloff, seconded by Commissioner John Laux to adjourn. Motion carried.

Yes- Marian Boyle-Rohloff, Rod Goldhahn, Rashad Cobb, John Laux, No- None, Abstain- None

VERBATIM MINUTES

- Good afternoon and welcome to the January 5th regular meeting of the Police and Fire Commission. We'll begin with roll call. Vice President Boyle-Rohloff?

- Here.

- Commissioner Cobb?

- Here.

- Commissioner Laux?

- Here.

- And Commissioner Dorff is excused. I received an agenda in the email and also a hard copy. Just one adjustment to that agenda. We will not be doing interviews today. One candidate withdrew and the other one actually broke his leg. So he'll be in surgery, and that interview will be scheduled at a later date. So with those changes, I will ask for approval of the agenda.

- Motion to approve.

- Second.

- Moved by Commissioner Cobb, seconded by Commissioner Boyle-Rohloff. All those in favor?

- [Commissioners] Aye.

- Any opposed? All right. That's been approved. And there were two packets of minutes in your folders. The special meeting of November 30th and the regular meeting on December 1st. If there are no changes, I'll entertain a motion to approve both of those.

- Motion to approve.

- Motion made by Commissioner Laux.

- Second.

- Second by Commissioner Boyle-Rohloff. Any discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor?

- [Commissioners] Aye.

- Any opposed? Unanimous consent. Information sessions. President's Report. We had a very nice sendoff for Chief Litton last Friday here at City Hall and then down at Station 1, where he did his final walkout for that station and some from several others. A very nice event and we wished him well after his nearly 10 years with us here in Green Bay. With that, I will turn it over to the Chiefs. So we'll start with Chief Davis.

- So, on the staffing front, we're doing pretty well. We were down as low as one vacancy. Unfortunately we have a probationary member who has encountered a lot of difficulty in training. And so we will have two sworn vacancies. We anticipate six retirements this year. We'll be going in front of Council to ask for contingency funded over-hire authorization to just go over-hire by six in this budget year so that we don't have to wait. Some of these retirements are happening later in the year. We don't want to wait to start training people if we know we're gonna have people leave. The proposal goes to the Finance Committee meeting after next, so it'll be I think late this month. And then hopefully we'll get Council action on that in February. Another thing I wanted to just share with this group, really briefly, is a collaboration that we're pretty excited about that we're working on in the Police Department with a group called Police2Peace. This is a group that does, it's the brainchild of a retired police chief from Southern California named Jim Bueermann who's pretty well known in our profession. And the whole concept is that, and they're much better at explaining it, and this is certainly something we could go into more depth if you wanted me to ask these folks to come do a presentation for you at some point. But they point out that in about 36 states, including this one, the legal term for what a police officer is, or a sheriff's deputy, is peace officer. It's a little bit of a frame shift on the role of a police officer to, we're here to keep the peace, and we're here to serve people. I won't ever be able to explain it as well as they do. But what this comes with is we applied for and we were granted a COPS Grant from the federal government to have them come in and do a day's worth of training. That should take place in May. In advance of that, they'll do some community

survey work, maybe some focus group work, and some internal survey work, just to calibrate their training program for our city in particular. I have worked with them before over the years, and this is a really good program I think for us. And I think it's something our folks will get a lot out of. I've been through that. They've actually just recently developed an online training program, and they have training programs for executive leadership, for police officers, for community members, for elected officials, and appointed boards like this one. So if that's something, I just wanted to put that out there for this group, if it's something that interests the PFC, and maybe having a more in-depth presentation from them and taking a look at some of their stuff, I can certainly help with that.

- Chief, just curious, who's the lead on this? Who's been the lead on this?

- I have.

- You have?

- Yeah

- So it's like leadership development or training? Moving towards more of a peace officer model?

- Basically the best way I could characterize it is police legitimacy training. And what they try to do is get officers to shift their mindset a little bit more to, and the way they put it is, number one, they want people to come at the work from a spirit of service rather than one of adventure. That's the way they put it. And then they're really big on the idea of harm reduction. It's almost like a Hippocratic Oath for the policing profession, that whatever we do, first of all, we're not gonna do harm. And to use one of their examples, we have rules in a lot of states where if we stop someone at a traffic stop and they don't have insurance or they don't have a driver's license, we tow the car. Well, is that always the right thing to do? Or can we give our officers the latitude to look at the bigger picture of that situation and see if maybe by doing that in that situation they're actually doing more harm? Or sometimes, maybe, because of the specific circumstances it does more harm to leave these people in possession of the car. But to look at things in terms of what's the harm gonna be and giving officers, because we know police officers have discretion, getting officers to think about how they use that discretion in a way that's designed to minimize the harm that comes out of their encounter or whatever it is. And it's not, what it isn't, is trying to avoid taking enforcement action when that's appropriate or it acknowledges, I think, is very realistic, in the way that it acknowledges some of the realities of our job. There are times in our work where we will have to use force on people. That happens. But can we come at that decision making process from a place of how do we minimize the harm in this encounter? Because what we're really here to do is serve the public.

- It sounds good.

- Do the officers know that this is in the pipeline?

- Some of them do. We're not quite to the point where I'm ready to roll this out broadly. It's not a secret. And a lot of the leadership team knows that we're doing this and there are some people who know, but we haven't come out with a full on communication of what this is gonna look like. But we will be, that's part of this process. And the folks from Police2Peace are gonna help with that. 'Cause like I said, there'll be some internal survey work and maybe even some discussions with people inside the organization, so we make sure we get something out of it though.

- And then one major part of it is, you said peace officers. Would that end up being a formal change to the Green Bay Peace Department? Or would it still remain the Green Bay Police Department?

- I think we need to remain the Green Bay Police Department because there's some legal weight that comes with the term police officer. And when I introduce myself as a police officer, that helps people understand the legal authority versus, the term and the statute is peace officer, but your average member of the public is not necessarily going to equate that with, I do have the authority to-

- So it's more of a mindset internally?

- Yeah.

- What you're talking about?

- Exactly. They have something that they call, and there are actually agencies that have worked with them. It seems more like sheriff's departments do this, where they'll change some of the, like the markings on their cars to peace officer. In this state and in this community, I don't really feel like that's something that would be helpful, only because of the legal weight that comes behind the term police. When I show up to the shoplifting call and introduce myself as a police officer, that makes sure people understand that I have lawful authority here and I have...

- Yeah.

- Does that make sense? There's some flexibility in how you apply this Police2Peace program, and one of the most important things to us is to make sure we apply this in a way that fits this community. I don't know that that fits our community. Does that make sense?

- It does. And I would agree 100%.

- All right, any other questions? All right.

- [Matthew] Well, my first meeting.

- Chief Knott now. You've been here about three days?

- I've been here three days. It's been a great, well, two and a half.

- So what you been doing?

- So it's been a busy time. Obviously we did our first interview today with a firefighter, so of interest to you. And we hope to bring quite a few more, because like we talked about earlier, we have quite a few openings, quite a few vacancies moving forward. So plan for that March hire. We're looking at possibly bringing two groups to kind of break it up just a little bit. So do like a March and an April, which would line up with training well for us, but keeps kind of the administrative parts a little bit separate so it helps our training staff quite nicely, and that was actually a recommendation of them moving forward too. So again, approximately 18, 20 people is a large group and we'll all have a lot of work to do moving forward with that. But up to the challenge. And work hard to improve our

recruitment efforts. That was something we talked about earlier on, too, is a big priority of mine. And certainly it's gonna be, this stretch we'll probably continue with a lot of practices we've had, just because of the timeframe. But as we move forward we're gonna look at some other options and some other opportunities too. So it is gonna be a struggle. It is. And like we said, that's what we talked about in some of the early interviews too, is that this is not a Green Bay issue. This is a nationwide challenge. And we've got some ideas and we're gonna work hard to move forward with those. So other than that, like you said, my official swear-in was on December 28th, and then the formal ceremony will be on February 3rd at 2:00 PM here in City Hall. But you will get a flyer.

- All right

- [Matthew] Any questions?

- Any questions for the Chief?

- All right. Very good, thank you.

- We are glad to have you in town.

- Yes.

- Mm hm.

- Well, thank you.

- I was at Station I on one of the Fridays, and everything just gets mixed together now, and people are really excited to have you, and specifically talking about the recruitment pieces. They were pretty aware of your success in recruiting in your previous role.

- That's exciting. And thank you for the kind words, too, at some of the recent interviews. And the media's been really very active and really looking for some stories.

- You're a celebrity now.

- And I've working very hard with them. It's been every day, so yeah. It keeps it off the Police's, off them for a bit, but.

- Appreciate that.

- Yeah. Yeah.

- Yeah.

- Chris has been there, done that.

- Yeah, it's old news.

- Yeah.

- But very excited to be here. And thank you for the opportunity.
- All right. All right. Next item is the Police Department Commander Promotional Process. A copy of that was in your little packet. As it indicates there, it's very similar or identical to the one that we just completed the last time we promoted Gary Richgels. Any questions for the Chief?
- Have you put it out for sign-up yet?
- Not yet. We just want to make sure we have the authorization from the PFC first, and then we'll do that shortly.
- And this is, is that a new commander position?
- Mm hm.
- It is, yes. This is gonna be a commander position in the Professional Standards Division. We've got authorization from Council to upgrade the Captain position
- Which is just turning back the hands of time. When I started here, there were the three commanders. There was one in charge of internal affairs, one in charge of detectives, one in patrol. And then-
- It's come full circle.
- Yeah, now it's coming full circle again. So good job, Chief. It needed to be and it should never have been taken away.
- That's the benefit of being an old, John.
- Yeah.
- Sticking around long enough is like history.
- That side curve, yeah.
- You're around long enough, it'll repeat itself.
- All right. Any other questions for the Chief? If not, I'd entertain a motion to approve.
- Motion to approve.
- Second.
- A motion by Commissioner Laux, seconded by Commissioner Cobb. Any further discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor?
- [Commissioners] Aye.

- Any opposed? Any abstained? All right. Let's go get a commander. Under regular business. Consideration with possible action on the communications of the budget status report and the budget spreadsheet. Both of those were in your packet, all related to hiring of officers and hiring of the fire chief. Hearing no discussion, I'll entertain a motion to receive those and place them on file.

- So moved.

- Is there a second?

- Second.

- Second.

- All right, we have a motion by Commissioner Boyle-Rohloff, seconded by Commissioner Cobb. Any further discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor?

- [Commissioners] Aye.

- Any opposed? All right, we will receive those and place on file. And consideration to pay the bills. Those were in your packet. Again, all related to hiring. Hearing no questions, I'll entertain a motion to pay the bills?

- Motion to pay the bills.

- We have a motion by Commissioner Cobb. Is there a second?

- Second.

- Second by Commissioner Boyle-Rohloff. Any further discussion? Hearing none, all those in favor?

- [Commissioners] Aye

- Any opposed? All right. So those will be paid. Next item deals with promotions, which have to do with the Police Department. The Commission may convene in, actually there are two separate items left in the agenda that deal with closed sessions. So I will read the closed session language for both. We will go into closed session once. And coming out of closed session I'll do a report, a similar report with four and five. So the first item is consideration with possible action on the request for promotion to the rank of Police Sergeant. And the second one is consideration with possible action on the promotion to the rank of Police Lieutenant. The Commission may convene in closed session pursuant to Sections 19.85 and , Wisconsin Statutes, to consider employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility. The Commission may thereafter reconvene in open session pursuant to Section 19.85 , Wisconsin Statutes, to report the results of the closed session and consider the balance of the agenda. And it's the identical closed session statement for the second item, so I won't reread that. Is there a motion to go into closed session for those two items?

- Motion to go into closed session.

- Motion by Commissioner Laux.
- Second.
- Second by Commissioner Boyle-Rohloff. All those in favor?
- [Commissioners] Aye.
- Any opposed? All right, we are in closed session.
- [Computer] Recording stopped.
- All right, we are back in open session. While in closed session we reviewed agenda items three and four, possible action on a sergeant promotion and a lieutenant promotion. And the Commission in unanimous consent supported promoting Officer Riley Peterson to Sergeant, and Sergeant Kris Thoreson to Lieutenant. And those will take place, effective?
- Tentatively January 10th.
- Okay.
- Okay. Both those will take place January 10th. And again, that was unanimous consent for both of those. Item number five, I announced at the beginning of the meeting that we would not be doing that today. There are no public hearings scheduled. So with that, that concludes our agenda, so I'll entertain a motion to adjourn.
- So moved.
- Motion to adjourn.
- Moved by Commissioner Boyle-Rohloff. How about a second, John?
- Second. I'll second it.
- Seconded by Commissioner Laux. All those in favor?
- [Commissioners] Aye.
- Any opposed? All right, we are adjourned.
- [Computer] Recording stopped.