

Forty Fort Civil Service Commission Meeting Minutes, September 24th, 2015 @ Forty Fort Borough Building

Meeting called to order by Chairman Rob Swaback at 5:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call. Present – Rob Swaback (Chairman), Tony Smith (Secretary), Mike Mey. Absent – Sara Michaels, Charles Suppon, Kathy Washko.

Chairman appointed Mike Mey as a voting member for this meeting to obtain a quorum.

Minutes of the last meeting (NOTE: there was no quorum for the meeting scheduled for 09/10/2015). Motion to accept by Secretary, Second by Mike Mey, unanimous approval.

Written exam discussion. Secretary reported that letters were sent to each applicant and the exam was advertised. Applicants were sent a second letter advising them of sample test/study guide availability, and were provided a link to access the Forty Fort Civil Service Rules, PA Borough Code/Civil Service Rules, and current police contract. On 09/10 the POST tests were made available to Civil Service Commission members for review; tests were reviewed by Tony Smith, Kathy Washko, and Sheryl Sealock, the Exam Administrator. No objections were raised about the tests. Tests were kept under lock and key with access limited to the Commission Secretary and the Exam Administrator, per the agreement with the test provider, Stanard & Associates. Written exam was administered on 09/12 at 10am in the Community Room of the Forty Fort Building, by Exam Administrator Sheryl Sealock with Tom Craig serving as proctor. Three of the 13 applicants were no-shows, probably due to Scranton PD holding their exam the same date; letters were sent to them removing them from the process, with a deadline to appeal of noon on Sept 25th; nothing has been received so far. Sheryl reported to the Secretary that there were no problems. Secretary mailed the tests the same day to Stanard & Associates for scoring. RESULTS: All 10 testers achieved the minimum passing score and were notified. Results were reviewed. Motion by the Secretary to accept the results, Second by the Chairman, unanimous approval. Individual results will be maintained in the Civil Service cabinet; access will be in accordance with Right to Know requirements. Letters of thanks were sent to Sheryl, Tom and Susan Budo of Stanard & Associates (she rushed to scoring for us).

Oral examination discussion. Secretary reported that notices were sent to applicants and the exam was advertised. Appointment letters were sent to the Oral Examination Board Members. Draft questions were reviewed. Motion by Secretary to approve the draft questions as the final version, Second by Chairman, unanimous approval. It was noted that the interview location moved from the Community Room to the Council Chambers; Secretary will ensure everyone is aware of the change.

Civil Service Commission solicitor. Chairman reported that Council approved our request to replenish the Civil Service Commission solicitor's budget by \$1000. Secretary will contact Atty. Todd A. Johns with several questions from the Commission and advise him of upcoming Fire Dept Civil Service Rules that he will need to review.

Discussion on stipend for exam administrators. The Commission discussed the difficulty in obtaining exam administrators. The Commission feels it would have more success if it were able to offer a stipend or some sort of incentive (e.g., gift card) to the exam administrators. The doctors administering the medical and psychological exams are paid, so it seems reasonable to treat the people administering the written, oral and physical agility tests the same. Civil Service Rules forbid Commission members from being paid, but not others. Secretary will send a letter to Council explaining this issue and asking that they provide such a stipend or incentive, retroactively and moving forward.

Right to Know officer. Borough Secretary Bonnie Arnone has been appointed the Borough Right to Know officer following the departure of Barbara Fairchild. Questions from the public about Civil Service Commission issues can be referred to her for action, in accordance with applicable Right to Know laws and regulations.

Background check discussion. If the Commission needs any particular questions addressed by the applicants, rather than duplicating efforts, they can be submitted to the Background Check Administrator for action once we get to that point of the process. To be discussed further.

Physical agility examination discussion. Secretary reported that letters were sent and it has been advertised. The agility course was reserved for our use with Greg Kriner, Kingston Director of Parks and Rec, for Sat, Oct 10th, 1PM-3PM at the Church Street Park, Kingston. Applicants will meet at the pavilion. Kingston PD was originally going to administer the test, but had to withdraw due to other commitments. Forty Fort Chief Hunsinger is able to administer the test, with a caveat that an outside person be appointed to supervise the test - several part-time Forty Fort officers are testing, and he doesn't want to give the appearance of any favoritism. Motion by Secretary to approve Chief Hunsinger and Forty Fort Officers Adam Michaels and Peter Lakkis to administer the Physical Agility Test (with caveat), second by Mike Mey, unanimous approval. Commission will search for an outside person/civilian to oversee the test. Secretary noted that Chief Hunsinger confirmed that he has access to the equipment needed for the test. Test will be rain or shine. Mike Mey will provide a sample waiver for applicants to sign before taking the test.

Secretary reported that he was reimbursed \$71.32 by the borough for Commission-related expenses for postage, envelopes, and mailing labels. A ream of paper was provided by the borough. The letterhead created for Commission mailings was discussed and no changes were requested.

Secretary reported that the borough has set up an email for Commission use – civilservice@fortyfort.org. All members are requested to 'cc' that email address with correspondence; the Secretary will also maintain a copy of all communications at that email. This will ensure all communications are maintained on Borough-accessible systems for future reference, record maintenance requirements, and Right to Know requests.

Chairman reported on discussions with council at their last meeting about the Firefighter Civil Service Rules. The Commission will begin drafting rules to cover the current Borough firefighters (currently four) and to ensure there is a process in place for future use by the Borough if they decide to reinstate the Borough Fire Department. The current contract is scanned and available in the Commission Dropbox account.

Discussion on Veteran's Preference. Chairman noted that the law requires two things – 10 points added to the final score and, if a veteran is in the top three, he/she must be selected over the other two. It was noted that one of the applicants did not properly request Veteran's Preference in accordance with state law. Discussion on whether the Commission should (or is required) to request that the applicant submit the appropriate documentation for consideration, or if the Commission is unable to request such documentation since the application period has closed. The applicant in question did submit some documentation, so the question is if this is just an administrative error that can be corrected or if it is a fatal flaw in the application. The Secretary will draft a letter to the applicant requesting the appropriate documentation but will first check with the Commission solicitor before sending.

Mike Mey disclosed that he discovered that one of the applicants is a distant relative. If the applicant winds up in the top three, he will abstain from the vote to certify the list so that there is no appearance of a conflict of interest.

Next meeting will be Thursday, October 8th, 5:00pm, Borough Council Chambers.

Motion to adjourn by Secretary, second by Mike Mey, unanimous approval.

Meeting adjourned at 5:37pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony M. Smith', written in a cursive style.

Anthony M. Smith
Secretary