

TOWNSHIP OF SALISBURY
Lehigh County, Pennsylvania
MINUTES FROM THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING – 3:00 PM
SEPTEMBER 21, 2009

A special meeting of the Township of Salisbury Police Civil Service Commission was publicly held on Monday, September 21, 2009 at 3:00 p.m. in the Township Municipal Building located at 2900 South Pike Avenue. Present were Commissioner Walker, Commissioner Hartzell and Commissioner Kraft. Also present were Mr. Soriano, Township Manager; Mr. Stiles, Chief of Police; and Attorney Dimmich. Others: Norma Cusick.

The Civil Service Commission Meeting was called to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – March 16, 2009

On motion of Mr. Hartzell, seconded by Ms. Kraft, the Civil Service Commission voted unanimously to approve the Minutes from the March 16, 2009 Civil Service Commission Meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Consideration of Motion to Certify the Eligibility List for appointment for Entry Level police.

Chief Stiles announced that the police examination process for entry level positions was concluded. Chief Stiles reviewed the various examinations that were conducted, along with the Background Investigation. Chief Stiles noted that the Commission should certify the list so that it can be utilized by the Board of Commissioners for entry level appointment(s).

Attorney Dimmich indicated that this is the time for the Commissioners to request information on the candidates that have been listed to be certified. Attorney Dimmich noted that in the past he has allowed the Commissioners to review the candidates' background investigation. Chief Stiles noted that both candidates that passed the agility fitness, written and oral exams have passed the background investigation. Mr. Soriano noted that there are no reasons that the two candidates should not be certified since all of the examiners have submitted their scores, either numerically or pass/fail. A discussion ensued on whether the Board would want to proceed with this list to hire a police officer. Attorney Dimmich noted that this decision to hire rests with the Board and their Solicitor. Attorney Dimmich noted that the Civil Service Commission's role was to prepare a list from which the Board can select a candidate for appointment. Attorney Dimmich noted that the Board may or may not decide to hire, or just wait until a new list is prepared. Attorney Dimmich also noted that if a candidate is a soldier or receives veteran's preference the Board will need to hire that candidate.

On motion of Mr. Hartzell, seconded by Ms. Kraft, the Civil Service Commission voted unanimously to certify the List of Eligible candidates for appointment as prepared and presented by the Chief of Police.

Chief Stiles will proceed to post the List in accordance with the Rules and Regulations.

Consideration of a Motion to amend the Civil Service Rules and Regulations.

Chief Stiles noted that that in order to expand the field of applicants and allow for more applicants to apply and take the entry level exam, the Commission should look at amending the current rule, which states only that an applicant:

“Must possess a diploma from an accredited high school or a graduate equivalency diploma, and be a graduate of a Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission Approved Police Training School and be currently qualified to be certified under Act 120.”

Chief Stiles noted that the change is sought in order to expand the pool of applicants that will be eligible to take the examination(s). Attorney Dimmich reviewed with the Commission several criteria utilized in other municipalities, such as Emmaus and Catasauqua. Attorney Dimmich noted that it will be up to the Commission to devise the eligibility criteria that they would want to utilize for Salisbury Township. A discussion ensued on the pros and cons of changing the current rule. Attorney Dimmich noted that the only statutory imposed requirements are that the applicant be 21 years of age and a United States citizen. The Commission may impose other reasonable standards to formulate their eligibility requirement. The Commissioners asked several questions pertaining to the current complement of officers focusing on current education, residency requirement, utilization of part time officers and attrition rate of the force. Chief Stiles and Mr. Soriano provided general information on their compensation and benefits and turn over ratio. Attorney Dimmich and Chief Stiles provided a brief background on the changes to the Municipal Police Education Training Act that went into effect in 2004 that allows the payment of the training tuition and 60% of the salary while the officer is at school. If another municipality hires the officer within two (2) years, then that municipality must pay the Township the other 40% of the salary.

Mr. Soriano noted that this discussion also took place before the last examination and noted that the current requirement substantially diminishes the pool of potential applicants as evidenced by the number of applicants on the list to be certified and puts a burden on the Commission to annually prepare an eligibility list. Mr. Soriano noted that this is a policy decision and he also briefly discussed it with the Board of Commissioners to gauge their support and there was some underlying support, but the concerns were monetary in terms of training the officers and potential loss from being hired somewhere else.

The Commission, after some deliberation, decided to select several criteria to guide the Solicitor in drafting an amendment to the eligibility rule 3.9 E, as follows:

Must have acquired, before the deadline for submitting completed applications, at least ONE of the following:

Must possess a diploma from an accredited high school or a graduate equivalency diploma, and be a graduate of a Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission Approved Police Training School and be currently qualified to be certified under Act 120.

Have obtained a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university.

Have obtained a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university in criminal justice/law enforcement or a related police field.

Must be in the last semester of obtaining his or her college degree or associates’ degree in law enforcement and certify that he or she will have obtained that degree by the time the Civil Service testing is complete(complete to be defined as the time

after completion of the physical agility test, written test, oral test, and background examination). Furthermore, if an applicant is allowed to proceed under this provision, if they have not obtained a degree at the time the Civil Service testing is complete, his or her name shall be automatically removed from the testing process and he or she shall be considered ineligible.

A high school diploma or graduate equivalency diploma and have served successfully as a full time officer for two continuous years with the state police force[or as a police officer in a municipal department in the following states(List to be inserted).

Attorney Dimmich noted that he would proceed with drafting a Resolution to incorporate these conceptual changes and for the Civil Service Commission to review the final language for the amendment.

Mr. Soriano noted that the new rules, if amended, should also incorporate the changes requested by the Commission by their Motion on March 16, 2009, as follows:

*On motion of Mr. Hartzell, seconded by Mr. Harper, the Civil Service Commission voted 3-0 to authorize the Chief of Police to engage Harrisburg Community College in administering the exams. **The order being as such: (1) Physical Fitness/Agility Test, (2) Written, (3) Oral, (4) Background. Additionally, authorizing the Chief and Township Manager to advertise the Notice of the Examination.** Motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.*

Attorney Dimmich noted that he will draft some general language to give the Commission latitude on the pecking order for the exams.

Motion by Mr. Walker and seconded by Mr. Hartzell to authorize the Solicitor to draft a Resolution in order to amend the current rules as discussed. Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chief Stiles discussed the Commission 2009 Annual Report. Chief Stiles noted that he along with the Township Manager will be assembling the 2009 Annual Report that will be distributed to the Commissioners at a later date.

Chief Stiles also provided the Commission with information concerning the services that the PA Police Chief Association could provide with regards to the administration of the exams. Chief Stiles noted that this issue could be discussed at their next meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Norma Cusick, 535 E. Emmaus Avenue, was present in the audience.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ms Kraft and seconded by Mr. Hartzell, the meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m.