

**CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Tuesday, January 11, 2011, 2:00 p.m.**

**City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Purchasing Conference Room #324, Bridgeport, CT 06604**

Commissioner Plummer called the regular meeting of the Civil Service Commission to order at 2:05 p.m. Present were Commissioners Rodgers and McBride. Also present were Personnel Director David Dunn and Clerk to the Commission Deborah Brelsford. City Attorney John Mitola was also in attendance. Commissioner Guedes joined the meeting in progress at 2:20 p.m.

**1. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes - APPROVED**

Personnel Director David Dunn told the Commissioners that he had reviewed and made a few edits to the Minutes and they were in order. On a motion made by Commissioner Rodgers and seconded by Commissioner McBride the minutes from the regular meeting held on December 14, 2010 were unanimously approved.

**2. Police Officer Examination #2302 Examiner's Report – APPROVED**

Mr. Dunn explained that we are in the background investigation phase as well as the psychological and polygraph pre-employment examination phase for the top 55 candidates. He further explained that Police Chief Joseph Gaudett was looking for a class of 23. Mr. Dunn said that some candidates were notified that they had not passed certain phases and that he anticipated disqualifying additional candidates based on the OIA background investigation. Three (3) candidates failed the drug test. One (1) candidate withdrew because he took a police officer position in another community. Nine (9) candidates were not recommended for hire by the psychologist.

Mr. Dunn told the Commissioners that Lisa Kollman was the number one person on the Police test and she served as Examiner. On a motion made by Commissioner Rodgers and seconded by Commissioner McBride the Bridgeport Police Officer Examination #2302 Employment List was unanimously approved.

**3. Fire Chief Brian Rooney – Request - GRANTED**

Fire Chief Brian Rooney told the Commissioners that he requested Acting Inspector Alsee McCray be made a Provisional Inspector. He further explained that Mr. McCray had completed all of the required courses for the position of Fire Inspector. Mr. Dunn stated that everything was in order from Civil Service standpoint. Commissioner Plummer inquired if the Chief was aware of any issue with the Union and the Chief said he believed the Union had not issue.

Mr. Dunn explained that Mr. McCray would be subject to the Fire Inspector examination and that Sandra Ferreira from the Civil Service staff was currently coordinating the job analysis with the Examiner. On a motion made by Commissioner McBride and seconded by Commissioner Rodgers the request made by Fire Chief Brian Rooney to make Acting Inspector Alsee McCray a Provisional Inspector was unanimously approved.

It is noted for the record that item number 5 was heard before item number 4 because Commissioner McBride does not vote in that instant and quorum was required and Commissioner Guedes had not yet arrived.

#### **4. Joseph Cennamo – Appeal (tabled from December 14, 2010) - DENIED**

Mr. Dunn explained that former Bridgeport Firefighter Joseph Cennamo had been terminated by the Fire Department several years ago. The State Board of Mediation and Arbitration had reinstated him on March 22, 2010 “subject to a fitness for duty examination by the third party provider used by the City for that purpose,” and “within a reasonable timeframe.” Mr. Dunn further noted that the arbitration award states “if reinstated because he is found fit for duty, he shall retain his seniority and his separation shall be considered a suspension.”

Mr. Dunn placed Mr. Cennamo’s reinstatement on hold because when Mr. Cennamo came into the Civil Service office on April 1, to have his reinstatement processed, Mr. Cennamo was told by Personnel Assistant Lisa Kollman that he had to go to a return to work fitness exam. Mr. Cennamo was acting agitated and complained. He then left the office and never returned. On April 6, 2010 Mr. Cennamo was arrested for stealing women’s shoes from Bob’s Store in Fairfield. After learning of the arrest, Mr. Dunn placed Mr. Cennamo’s reinstatement on hold on April 9, 2010.

Mr. Dunn noted further that neither Mr. Cennamo nor the union ever contacted Civil Service again between April and December 2010. On or about October 29, 2010 Mr. Dunn learned through the Fire Department that Mr. Cennamo had been arrested several more times subsequent to April 2010, and on October 29, 2010 the Mayor’s Office requested the Bridgeport Police Department OIA Division to conduct an investigation into Mr. Cennamo’s activities and arrests. (Letter and complete report attached.) Mr. Dunn explained that he learned of Mr. Cennamo’s arrests and the most recent felony arrest on October 13, 2010 for second degree assault, second degree strangulation and interfering with an emergency. Following inquiries with the Police Department and Fire Department on December 2, 2010 Mr. Dunn formally terminated Mr. Cennamo’s reinstatement processing for failure to comply with the terms of his arbitration award as well as Mr. Dunn’s authority under Section 212 of the City of Bridgeport Charter that he was unfit for hire due to habits and conduct.

Mr. Dunn further explained to the Commission that Mr. Cennamo never passed his fitness for duty examination as required by the arbitration award.

Mr. Dunn further informed the Commission that the Fire Union had called him prior to today’s meeting and that they would not attend today’s meeting and were filing an appeal directly to Hartford.

On a motion made by Commissioner Plummer and seconded by Commissioner Rodgers the appeal made by Robert Whitbread, President IAFF Local 834, on behalf of Mr. Cennamo, regarding Mr. Dunn’s termination of Mr. Cennamo’s re-employment process was denied and the Commission upheld Mr. Dunn’s action regarding the termination of Mr. Cennamo’s re-employment process.

#### **5. Lashanna Crowell – Appeal - TABLED**

Mr. Dunn told the Commissioners that Ms. Crowell and her business agent, Mr. Bob Flynn, from the Teamsters Union, were present. Mr. Dunn said that after the list was established and employees were hired from it that Ms. Crowell applied for her Veteran’s Preference Points. Mr. Dunn said that Ms. Crowell was also relying on her time in training (and not service) to qualify for the Veteran’s Preference Points. Commissioner Plummer asked Ms. Crowell if she would like to have her appeal heard in Executive Session and she replied that it could be heard in Public

Session. Ms. Crowell explained that a previous employee of the Civil Service staff, Sherri Rather, told her that she would be granted the points when the required paperwork was submitted. It wasn't until somebody Ms. Crowell's office was laid off that she discovered that she was never granted the points.

Ms. Lisa Kollman said there was nothing in the file to indicate that the required paperwork was received in Civil Service. Ms. Kollman further explained that traditionally, Veteran's Preference Points are accepted during the application period, which was January 2009. Ms. Crowell told the Commission that she had to drive to Syracuse, New York to get the DD-214. Mr. Flynn explained that "seniority" is determined by test scores and that the recent layoff affects Lashanna because she is on the 11 pm to 7 am shift now. Mr. Flynn added that there was much confusion. Ms. Crowell said she didn't get to see her test scores. All five (5) detention officers were hired on the same day. Ms. Kollman stated that the onus is on the candidate to provide the DD-214 form during the application period and that the published notice in the Connecticut Post newspaper states this and that since Ms. Crowell did apply for Residency Preference Points at the time it is believed that she knew about the Veteran's Preference Points as well.

Mr. Dunn explained that the City's practice traditionally has been that once the list is established and the City has hired off the list that the Civil Service office does not make changes. Mr. Dunn further explained that granting Ms. Crowell the Veteran's Preference points at this point will adversely affect other employees and that the Civil Service office has rules and regulations. Ms. Kollman also added that the Civil Service staff person who took care of Ms. Crowell at the Civil Service counter at the time of application would have discussed the Veteran's Preference Points with Ms. Crowell at that time. (Ms. Crowell was on activity duty at that time and didn't qualify yet as a Veteran.)

Mr. Dunn explained that the law used to apply Veteran's Preference Points to entry level examination as well as promotional examinations and that unions lobbied the State to change this to entry level examinations only. City Attorney John Mitola added that from a legal standpoint that Ms. Crowell submitted her points in a period too long after the accepted period January 9, 2009 application period.

Commissioner Guedes stated that the Commission was very sympathetic to Ms. Crowell but that she wasn't sure that they could do anything to help her. Mr. Dunn explained that Civil Service encourages a person to get all the credit he or she is entitled to and explained further that in the current police officer examination process that we take the applicant's word and if OIA finds that the truth was not told then the candidate is disqualified. Mr. Dunn said that to apply the points now causes more problems than solving Ms. Crowell's problem.

Mr. Dunn also said that Veteran's Preference Points are common knowledge and are very well known. He further added that the City has an employee that coordinates rides to the VA in West Haven. It was decided that City Attorney John Mitola would review this with a second set of eyes and therefore Ms. Crowell's appeal would be tabled to the February 8, 2011 Civil Service Regular Meeting .

*The Commission entered Executive Session at 3:00 p.m. to discuss exam issues that were not related to Mr. Cesidio Palmieri's appeal. The Commission entered Public Session at 3:29 p.m. At 3:30 p.m. the Commission entered Executive Session at Mr. Palmieri's request. At 3:59 p.m. the Commission entered Public Session.*

## **6. Cesidio Palmieri – Request - DENIED**

On a motion made by Commissioner Rodgers and seconded by Commissioner McBride Mr. Palmieri's request was unanimously denied.

## **7. Kurt Hoben – Request – TABLED**

The Commission received correspondence from Mr. Hoben regarding his score on the Police Officer #2302 Examination. Attorney Karen Torre, on behalf of her client, Mr. Hoben, notified City Attorney Betsy Edwards that enough notice was not given to Mr. Hoben in order to make arrangements to attend the January 11<sup>th</sup> Commission meeting. Attorney Edwards notified Attorney Torre that the request would be tabled until the February Civil Service Commission meeting.

## **8. Personnel Director's Report**

### **• Police Examination Status Report**

Mr. Dunn gave a status report on the police examination and noted that regarding disqualifying candidates based on "habits and conduct" he was going to review some of his concerns with an advisory panel made up of senior Police Department Officials and personnel from the City Attorney's office.

### **• Special Appeal Meetings**

Commissioner Guedes inquired if special appeal meetings would be needed and Mr. Dunn indicated that he was not yet quite sure. We have received two (2) appeals based on the disqualifications he made because of failing pre-employment psychological evaluations.

### **• Fire Marshal Examination #2303 Examiner's Report – APPROVED**

Civil Service Personnel Assistant I, Sandra Ferreira, handed out the Examiner's Report on the Fire Marshal Examination #2303, for which she coordinated with Mr. Chuck Hale. Although some appeals were made and scores were adjusted with some points added, the rank stayed the same. All those who took the exam were notified of any adjustments on January 11, 2011. On a motion made by Commissioner McBride and seconded by Commissioner Rodgers the Commission unanimously approved the Fire Marshal Examination #2303 employment list.

### **• Fire Inspector Examination**

When the test is given thirty (30) to forty (40) applicants are expected.

### **• Entry Level Firefighter**

Announcement will be made soon for the entry level Firefighter examination.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:13 p.m.