

# **CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING**

City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Wheeler Rooms A and B, Bridgeport, CT 06604

Tuesday, June 19, 2012

2:00 p.m.

## **MINUTES**

Commissioner Guedes called the June 19, 2012 special meeting of the Civil Service Commission to order at 2:10 p.m. Present were Commissioners Correa, McBride and Rodgers. Also attending were Personnel Director David Dunn, Clerk to the Commission Deborah Brelsford, Police Chief Joseph Gaudett, Lt. Rebeca Garcia, Sgt. Paul Grech, and City Attorney John Mitola. On a motion made by Commissioner McBride and seconded by Commissioner Rodgers the Commission entered executive session at 2:10 p.m.

### **1. Branden Collins Appeal - DENIED**

The Commission received a request from Mr. Collins for an appeal regarding his disqualification from the Police Officer #2302 exam by the Personnel Director, based on the background investigation performed by the Office of Internal Affairs. The Commission returned to public session at 2:22 p.m. Commissioners Correa, McBride, and Rodgers each respectively denied Mr. Collins' appeal.

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

Police #2302 Second Academy list – Mr. Dunn explained that as of Friday, June 15, the Civil Service department had 25 police candidates ready for the Academy to start on July 9<sup>th</sup>. Over the weekend 4 candidates withdrew from the process, mostly because they had taken positions in New Haven in May and decided to stay in New Haven. Another 5 names have been taken from the list and these people have begun the polygraph and psychological evaluation process. Two will begin the OIA background investigation with an orientation on June 25 or June 27. Mr. Dunn had discussed the possibility of a mini class starting a few weeks later or parallel classes. Chief Joe Gaudett said that every day he gets phone calls from area Police Chiefs asking for a seat in the upcoming academy for a police candidate from that town. The Police employment list expires in April 2013.

Firefighter #2306 list – Mr. Dunn stated that the first 50 names on the list would be attending an OIA background investigation orientation, with half on each session on June 25 or 27. The City has been awarded a federal grant. Eighteen (18) new firefighters will start the Connecticut Fire Academy in Windsor Locks on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Commissioner Guedes stated that the list looked balanced. Mr. Dunn reminded the Commission that Bridgeport residents received an additional 15% of their score for resident preference points and that veterans received 5 additional points.

Commissioner Correa stated that there were a lot of names from Bridgeport. There is a total of 284 names on the employment list.

Lt. Rebeca Garcia addressed the Commission and said the OIA department was dedicated to bringing forth the best and their efforts would not slack for Fire. The criteria for firefighters may be different than for police officers, however, the work ethic of her department would not change. Commissioner Guedes said she appreciated OIA's efforts.

Commissioner Correa asked Mr. Dunn if felons are accepted in the Fire department and he said felonies would depend on the crime, the severity, the timeframe and the rehabilitation. As an example, larceny has 6 degrees. A cutoff may be established. Information would be gathered and Mr. Dunn would look at it and decide. He has requested a meeting with the Mayor and his staff about this. Mr. Dunn said he may not be as tough as Lt. Garcia and not as provincial as Chief Rooney. He further explained that there is history with the Fire department from the last hiring class and there have been changes within the department. Ten to twelve firemen have been terminated for various criminal type offenses. There was an incident with one putting acid in his neighbor's water supply. Fire Marshals were terminated. One is in process now for a serious criminal act. The past couple of years have been terrible. Mr. Dunn said Civil Service needs to be tough with vetting candidates who have issues.

Commissioner Correa inquired if the above mentioned cases were ex-offenders or if these things happened after they became firefighters and Mr. Dunn replied that it was after they became firefighters. Commissioner Correa asked if ex-offenders would be hired as firefighters and Mr. Dunn explained that sexual assault is an issue because men and women work together in the firehouses. City Attorney John Mitola stated that the crime will have to be looked at and also how much time has passed. Also, how the person has led his life. Then Mr. Dunn and OIA will bring matters to the attention of the Commission. Commissioner Correa stated that the Commission has to be very clear and that in front of these individuals she does not want it to look like the Commission has questions. Attorney Mitola said that the Commission will be given legitimate reasons why somebody was disqualified from the process. It is important to remember that firefighters are in people's homes. When they are in homes they should be doing their job and not stealing. It should be put on record why somebody is being disqualified. Commissioner Correa said that firefighters are first responders and should be a sense of security. She wants prudence at how the decision was made, a transparent process and mindfulness of public safety.

Lt. Garcia said that the State does not allow OIA to process firefighter candidates through NCIC because they are not considered to be law enforcement. Candidates will divulge information about themselves. OIA has some different tools such as court systems and cases. There is an Accurint system that shows residence. Interviews will be completed with family, neighbors, employers and OIA also networks with other departments. It can take 3 or 4 hours for some candidates to complete the OIA questionnaire. Mr. Dunn said that contingent offers can be made

to candidates if OIA has not completed their reports by the end of August in time for the Academy start. There is a one year probationary period for new firefighters.

Mr. Dunn will let the Commissioners know if he is granted a meeting with the Mayor to discuss these firefighter matters and Commissioner Correa asked that criteria be shared with the Civil Service Commissioners and Mr. Dunn agreed to this. Mr. Dunn and the Commissioners also agreed that it would be policy to accept the psychological evaluation from Behavioral Health Consultants and not to grant appeals for disqualifications resulting from the psychological evaluation. The psychological evaluation will be similar to telecommunicator but teamwork will be the focus. In the Academy the new firefighters will have to pass CPAT (Candidate Physical Ability Test) again.

On a motion made by Commissioner McBride and seconded by Commissioner Rodgers the Commission adjourned the June 19, 2012 special meeting of the Civil Service Commission at 2:55 p.m.