

**TUMWATER CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
JULY 13, 2023 Page 1**

Civil Service Commission

CONVENE:

5:43 p.m.

PRESENT:

Chair Simon Tee and Commissioner Blake Chard.

Staff: Secretary/Chief Examiner Juliann McGarva, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, and Police Commander Jay Mason.

**CHANGES TO
AGENDA:**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**APPROVAL OF
MAY 18, 2023
MINUTES:**

MOTION:

Commissioner Chard moved, seconded by Chair Tee, to approve the minutes of May 18, 2023 as published. A voice vote approved the motion.

**STATUS OF
ELIGIBILITY
LISTS:**

Chief Examiner McGarva reported several of the eligibility lists have expired; however, staff does not propose to re-open any lists at this time. The Captain Medical Services Officer and the Fire Captain Promotional lists expired in May 2023. The City plans to create new lists in 2024. The Firefighter Paramedic list is an active continuous list. The Firefighter Entry list is effective until November 2023. The Lateral Firefighter list is effective until March 2024. The Paramedic Lieutenant list is effective until May 2024.

**APPROVAL OF
ENTRY LEVEL
POLICE
ELIGIBILITY
LIST:**

Chief Examiner McGarva reported the City conducted oral boards in June. Three candidates are proposed for addition to the eligibility list based on their scores. Two names are proposed for removal as they both failed the Chief's interview. The revised list includes seven names.

MOTION:

Commissioner Chard moved, seconded by Chair Tee, to approve the Entry Level Police Eligibility List as presented. A voice vote approved the motion.

**APPROVAL OF
PARAMEDIC
FIREFIGHTER
ELIGIBILITY
LIST:**

Chief Examiner McGarva reported the list is an active continuous list. Another testing procedure was completed by Medic One. One name is proposed for addition to the list. The proposed list includes four names.

MOTION:

Commissioner Chard moved, seconded by Chair Tee, to approve the proposed Paramedic Firefighter Eligibility List as presented. A voice vote approved the motion.

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**APPROVAL TO
CREATE
CONTINUOUS
LIST FOR POLICE
SERVICE
SPECIALIST I:**

Chief Examiner McGarva reported the City has pursued a recruitment process for Police Service Specialist I three times with no success in hiring an applicant. Staff proposes initiating an active continuous recruitment process for the position to assist the City in responding quickly to the recruitment environment. Previously, the City has initiated a background check of several successful candidates; however, during that process, the candidates accepted other positions with other agencies prior to completing the background process. Converting the recruitment process to an active continuous process avoids presenting new exam plans for each recruitment process. The exam plan would not change other than the list would be an active continuous list. The last list was enacted in January 2023. No names remain on the original list. The City proposes to convert the position to active continuous until the position is filled.

Chair Tee questioned the need for converting the position to an active continuous process if there would be no change in the exam. Police Commander Mason explained that conversion to an active continuous process enables the City to recruit for the position continually rather than seeking approval from the Commission each time the list has expired or the list has been exhausted. The request is to enable the City's recruitment process to be more flexible and competitive.

MOTION:

Commissioner Chard moved, seconded by Chair Tee, to approve the request to accept Police Service Specialist I exam plan as an active continuous recruitment as presented. A voice vote approved the motion.

**UPDATE ON RFA
PROCESS AND
FIRE
DEPARTMENT
PLANS FOR THE
FUTURE:**

Fire Chief Hurley briefed the Commission on the Regional Fire Authority (RFA) process and recent outcome.

Today, the state has 13 RFAs with two RFAs located in Thurston County. West Thurston Regional Fire Authority serves Rochester, Littlerock/Grand Mound. South Thurston Fire & EMS serves the Yelm and Rainier areas.

In 2018, the City of Tumwater hired a consultant to complete a fire regionalization study to consider options available for regionalization of fire departments in the area. Participants in the study included the Tumwater Fire Department, Olympia Fire Department, Lacey Fire District 3, Fire District 6 (East Olympia), McLane Black Lake Fire Department, and West Thurston Regional Fire Authority. The extensive study included a recommendation by the consultant for Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater to consider forming a regional fire authority and that the other fire districts should consider combining separately. At the end of the study process, Lacey Fire District 3 elected not to participate in the RFA planning process. Olympia and Tumwater continued to pursue conversations. The pandemic provided challenges to each department with each city struggling to continue the planning process. However, each jurisdiction was able to restart the planning process in March 2021 with each

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city electing to form a planning committee to evaluate the formation of a RFA.

The planning committee held its first meeting in August 2021 and met twice a month to develop a joint plan for the RFA to present to each city council. The plan was presented and adopted by each city council in December 2022 and approved for placement on the April 2023 ballot as a special election. Placing the request on a later ballot would have postponed the implementation of the RFA from January 1, 2024 to January 1, 2025.

Voters did not pass the ballot measure. The funding methodology included a fire benefit charge, which required a super majority vote to enact the fire benefit charge. The fire benefit charge is an amount of resources required to extinguish a fire in any structure. The fire benefit charge was based on a formula for residential and commercial/industrial uses.

Commissioner Chard said he recalled that the proposal included the creation of some positions in anticipation of the passage of the RFA. He asked about that particular process and the future of the positions. Fire Chief Hurley said the proposal included creation of two battalion chief positions in the RFA. The Tumwater Fire Department has been working to implement battalion chiefs for a number of years. Through the City's last biennial budget process, the fire department gained three new staff positions enabling the fire department to increase minimum staffing and include battalion chiefs on duty 24/7. The RFA plan included adding two battalion chiefs as both departments would have had battalion chiefs and the plan adopted the model to include two battalions. The process of hiring battalion chiefs at Tumwater Fire Department was a parallel process with the RFA planning process. Additionally, the RFA included administrative staff as each department is currently served by each city's administrative departments.

Chair Tee inquired about the reason for withdrawal from the RFA planning process by Lacey Fire District 3. Fire Chief Hurley replied that the City of Lacey had been annexed by Lacey Fire District 3. The district is the largest fire department in Thurston County and covers an extensive area. Fire districts operate differently than city fire departments. Lacey Fire District 3 Fire Commissioners made the decision and cited a timing issue to join the planning process with the cities.

Chair Tee questioned the overall reason for the proposal to form a RFA. Fire Chief Hurley responded that local governments are funding constrained. Fire and police comprise approximately 50 percent of the general fund of city budgets. As general fund departments, there is competition with other city departments and resources. The demand for fire and emergency response has increased steadily and continually stretching resources. The idea was an option to create a structure to adequately fund the department independent from the

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cities and to ensure adequate funding for future needs, as well as establishing reserve accounts. Although initially, start-up costs would be higher, over the long-term the organization would be more efficient rather than two individual departments.

Fire Chief Hurley added that the fire department's strategic plan expired in 2020 and strategic planning was paused during the RFA planning process. The fire department is preparing to issue a request for proposal (RFP) for a consultant to conduct an agency evaluation and a strategic plan for the fire department. The community, businesses, and other City departments and employees will participate in the process. The evaluation will include a review of existing deployment models. As the City expands and growth increases, call volume increases. The agency evaluation will identify the status of the department today in terms of meeting fire standards and identify needs of the organization, which will inform the strategic planning process to produce a five-year plan with longer-term objectives. The RFP is scheduled to be released within the next several weeks with the planning process beginning in October and ending six months later as the effort includes data collection, site visits, and community meetings. The RFA consultant would be able to submit a proposal for consideration as well.

UPDATES:

Police Commander Mason reported two new police officers started at the police academy this week. The officers were hired in March and were originally assigned academy dates of November and December. Their attendance was moved up and the department anticipates graduation of the officers in mid to late December 2023. Another police officer is nearing completion of the hiring process with the academy date unknown at this time. The department also has a vacant front office position.

The Police Department supported the City's 4th of July activities. The department is planning for summer operations and accommodating vacations.

Police Commander Mason addressed questions about vacant officer positions. The last hiring action fully staffs the department. However, several officers are eligible for retirement. At this time, their retirement dates are unknown.

Fire Chief Hurley reported on personnel changes and hiring for the fire department. Two Firefighter Paramedic candidates have received conditional offers. The candidates will complete medical and psychological backgrounds. If the candidates successfully complete the process, one applicant would begin at the fire academy in August and the second would begin in September.

A Battalion Chief recently retired. The department promoted a Fire Lieutenant from the department to replace the position. Two Fire Lieutenant candidates will be interviewed from an existing list next week to fill the vacant position of

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Fire Lieutenant. Selection of a candidate will create another opening of either a Paramedic Firefighter or entry level Firefighter. The department has scheduled entry level Firefighter Chief interviews from an existing eligibility list.

Operationally, summer is the time of the highest leave usage. The department continues to maintain minimum staffing. The department has participated in wildland firefighter training.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting is scheduled on August 10, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT: Commissioner Chard moved, seconded by Chair Tee, to adjourn the meeting at 6:14 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion.

DocuSigned by:
Simon Tee
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Simon Tee, Chair

DocuSigned by:
Juliann McGarva
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Juliann McGarva, Secretary Chief Examiner

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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