

**TUMWATER CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING  
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**CONVENE:** 5:31 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Chair Simon Tee and Commissioners Blake Chard and Pat Schneider.

Staff: Secretary/Chief Examiner Michelle Sutherland, Fire Chief Brian Hurley, Police Chief Jon Weiks, and Deputy Fire Chief Shawn Crimmins.

Chair Tee welcomed three high school students from Black Hills High School.

**CHANGES TO AGENDA:** Chief Examiner Sutherland requested the addition of Updates to the agenda. The agenda was revised to reflect approval of the Civil Service Commission Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2024.

**APPROVAL OF CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 12, 2024:** The minutes were corrected to change “Commissioner Blake” to reflect “Commissioner Chard” on page 2.

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Schneider moved, seconded by Commissioner Chard, to approve the minutes of December 12, 2024 as amended. A voice vote approved the motion.**

**STATUS OF JANUARY ELIGIBILITY LISTS:** Chief Examiner Sutherland reviewed the status of the eligibility lists. Active and continuous lists remain effective. There are no other changes proposed to the lists.

**ENTRY LEVEL POLICE ELIGIBILITY:** Chief Examiner Sutherland advised of the proposed request to add eight entry level police officer candidates to the eligibility list with one removal from the list because the applicant was hired. Staff is seeking approval to add eight names to the list for January 2025.

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Chard moved, seconded by Commissioner Schneider, to approve the Entry Level Police Officer Eligibility List as presented. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**LATERAL PARAMEDIC FIREFIGHTER ELIGIBILITY:** Chief Examiner Sutherland reported on the proposed removal of five candidates because the candidates were hired by the Tumwater Fire Department. Two candidates are proposed for removal because they failed the Chief’s interview. No new additions are proposed to the list.

Commissioner Chard expressed appreciation for the number of candidates the fire department hired.

Commissioner Schneider inquired about efforts to recruit more

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candidates to add to the list. Fire Chief Hurley advised that the recruitment is a continuous process with some applications pending for future placement on the list.

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Schneider moved, seconded by Commissioner Chard, to approve the Lateral Paramedic Firefighter Eligibility List as presented. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**PARAMEDIC  
FIREFIGHTER  
ELIGIBILITY LIST:** Chief Examiner Sutherland reported the request is for approval of the Paramedic Firefighter Eligibility List. Three existing names on the list have expired.

Commissioner Schneider asked whether the department has any vacancies requiring recruitment.

Fire Chief Hurley said the list is similar to the prior list as it is a continuous process with applications submitted that have not been processed. In the next several months, the department will likely sponsor some oral boards. Successful applicants will be requested for addition to the list. At this time, all Paramedic Firefighter positions are filled.

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Chard moved, seconded by Commissioner Schneider, to approve the Paramedic Firefighter Eligibility List as presented. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**RECLASSIFICATION  
OF ADMINISTRATIVE  
ASSISTANT TO  
EXECUTIVE  
ASSISTANT:** Chief Examiner Sutherland said the fire department's Administrative Assistant duties have changed to reflect a higher level of support to executive leadership. Staff is seeking approval to reclassify the position to an Executive Assistant based on workforce planning Human Resources has undertaken over the last year. The Fire Chief also recommends the reclassification. The reclassification would align the duties of the job with a proper job classification.

Chair Tee noted that the request was presented at the December meeting and at the request of the Commission, staff provided job descriptions for each position. He invited comments or questions on the proposal.

Fire Chief Hurley said that during his tenure at the department, the responsibilities of the position have changed. Through workforce planning and the biennial budget process, the proposal is timely to adjust the position accordingly. Many of the job responsibilities are of a confidential nature to include other job tasks. Staff reviewed the existing job classification specifications within the City to identify the best match for the increase in responsibilities and determined that the Executive Assistant classification was appropriate. He acknowledged

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the analysis completed by Commissioner Schneider. Staff considered much of the same information and documented all responsibilities of the position. In some respects, the issue is a merging of the two positions to avoid the situation of creating another new position.

Chief Examiner Sutherland explained that the City has been engaged in workforce planning that includes a review of all job descriptions for each position in the City over the next year.

Commissioner Schneider commented that during her review of both job descriptions, it was difficult to differentiate the differences between the two positions. She used AI to compare the two descriptions. It appears that the Administrative Assistant position encumbers more departmental responsibilities and has a greater span of supervisory control with higher education requirements than the Executive Assistant position. She asked whether the proposal would result in a promotion for the incumbent reflective of an increase in salary, the amount of the salary change, and the number of positions that would be affected.

Chief Examiner Sutherland advised that the proposal is for one position resulting in an increase in two pay bands above the current Administrative Assistant position equating to approximately a 10% increase in annual salary. The increase would equate to approximately \$7,000 annually.

Commissioner Schneider said the concern is the possibility of other Administrative Assistants requesting a promotion to Executive Assistant. She is concerned about setting a precedent. It is important to document the justification for the position within the fire department and the reasons for warranting a reclassification.

Chief Examiner Sutherland advised that Administrative Assistant positions within the City are specific to each department. The proposed action only reflects the Administrative Assistant assigned to the fire department as a Civil Service position, which does not apply to any other Administrative Assistant position in the City. For comparison, the police department is assigned a Police Administrative Manager responsible for all the duties of the Executive Assistant in addition to confidential duties. The fire department lacks that type of position. Approval of an Executive Assistant position in the fire department would ensure alignment of the position with current duties and responsibilities.

Fire Chief Hurley responded to the analysis conducted by Commissioner Schneider and explained his interpretation of the qualifications and educational requirements of each position. Chief

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Examiner Sutherland added that the position descriptions for both positions are included in the review of all positions in 2025.

Commissioner Schneider encouraged staff to use AI in the analysis as it pinpoints shortfalls and gaps in current job descriptions. Chief Examiner Sutherland advised that the City is not allowed to use AI until the City has developed policies on the use of AI.

Commissioner Schneider continued to express concerns surrounding the proposal and invited feedback from other members. Commissioner Chard responded that he did not have any concerns having worked on job classifications and job descriptions for many years. Language that speaks to requirements in use today address a minimum requirement with a preference for a degree affording the hiring authority the ability to consider the person's experience and knowledge and who might be a better candidate than a candidate who just received a degree but has no working experience.

Chair Tee asked about the availability of any criteria that defines the difference between the two positions in terms of complexity of duties or importance of decision-making responsibilities. Chief Examiner Sutherland affirmed that criteria exist.

Fire Chief Hurley noted that Chief Examiner Sutherland developed the rationale and cited strategic support, confidentiality, and a higher level of support. She developed a list that captures the justification and additional responsibilities of the position. For example, the Administrative Assistant has not been historically involved in labor negotiations. Based on a collaborative-interest based bargaining model, it is important for staff to be present to track proceedings to enable full participation of members. That example speaks to a confidential process requiring staff support. Another example is involvement in contract negotiations with Thurston County Medic One to support 28 paramedics in the fire department. Those duties/responsibilities are not included within the scope of the Administrative Assistant position.

Commissioner Schneider requested clarification as to the extent of involvement within those two examples. Fire Chief Hurley said the position participates in discussions surrounding impacts of various proposals and how they might affect the department. Chief Examiner Sutherland added that the position completes confidential data analysis and provides the information to a team.

Discussion followed on the higher-level aspects of the position involving confidentiality. The position also supervises other support staff in the fire department. The fire department could expand the

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number of support positions in the future.

Commissioner Schneider asked about the possibility of adding the higher level supervisory and confidentiality responsibilities to the job description. Fire Chief Hurley said the job description could be expanded with the recognition that the position description is scheduled for review in 2025 as part of the City's effort to review all job classifications.

Commissioner Schneider reiterated that the current job description of the Executive Assistant is not reflective of the increase in job responsibilities and lacks a clear distinction of a higher-level position than an Administrative Assistant. She suggested updating the Executive Assistant job description to reflect the position's responsibilities.

Chair Tee referred to concerns that an upgrade of the position might prompt other Administrative Assistants to request a similar upgrade. Commissioner Schneider acknowledged that it was one of her concerns as the action might set a precedent.

Chief Examiner Sutherland pointed out that the position in the fire department is a Civil Service position and does not correspond to other Administrative Assistant positions in the City working in other departments. The position is specific only to the fire department.

Commissioner Schneider asked about the number of both Administrative Assistants and Executive Assistants within the City working in other departments. Chief Examiner Sutherland said the City employs one Confidential Executive Assistant working for the Mayor, City Administrator, and the City Council. Five Administrative Assistants are assigned to other City departments.

Fire Chief Hurley said the proposal for reclassifying the position was reviewed with the Mayor and the City Administrator as part of the City's budget process. The Mayor and City Administrator supported the proposal and the increase in pay was approved in the City's budget.

Commissioner Schneider reiterated her request for the job description to be updated in 2025 to reflect the higher level of confidentiality and an increase in responsibilities to justify the salary increase and to distinguish between the two positions.

**MOTION:**

**Commissioner Schneider moved to direct staff to prepare a revised job description to clarify the higher level of confidentiality that is required for the position to distinguish from the Administrative Assistant position description.**

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Commissioner Chard asked about the potential impact to the department by delaying action on the proposal. Fire Chief Hurley advised that operationally, there would be no direct impact other than the issue has been an ongoing process to resolve. There would be no direct operational impacts.

Commissioner Chard asked whether the Commission has the authority to request a new position description or only when staff presents a new position description for consideration. Chief Examiner Sutherland advised that the Commission typically acts when a position description is presented by staff.

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Chard seconded the motion. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

**ELECTION OF COMMISSION CHAIR:** Chair Tee invited nominations for Chair.

*Commissioner Schneider nominated Blake Chard to serve as Chair. Chair Tee seconded the nomination.*

No other nominations were offered.

**MOTION:** **By a unanimous vote of affirmation, Commissioner Chard was elected to serve as Chair.**

**UPDATES:** Chief Examiner Sutherland reviewed the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act and the importance of avoiding violation of the Act by the sharing of emails as a group.

Fire Chief Hurley reported on the hiring of 10 Firefighter Paramedics. The new employees are attending the Advanced Life Support Academy. The academy is a six-week training course. Five of the employees will return as they are trained as firefighters with the other five continuing on to the fire academy.

Police Chief Weiks advised that he is currently on medical leave.

Police Chief Weiks thanked Chair Tee for his service to the police and fire departments over the last several years. He wished him the best in his next adventures.

Police Chief Weiks reported that one new police officer is scheduled to attend the basic law enforcement academy on January 22, 2025. Not too long ago, the department was required to wait six to eight months before a new hire could be scheduled to attend the academy. The reduction to two months today will benefit the department especially in

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the hiring process and in reducing the time to onboard a new police officer. The department recently hired a lateral police officer candidate. The major hurdle is obtaining equipment for the new officer, especially body armor because of ongoing delays in obtaining equipment. The officer cannot work on a shift until equipped with the proper equipment, especially body armor. The department currently has two vacant police officer positions with two background investigations in progress.

Fire Chief Hurley thanked Chair Tee on behalf of the City for his service on the Commission from 2010 to 2025. He presented him with a Certificate of Appreciation from the City.

Chair Tee said it was a pleasure working with staff from the City as it served as an enjoyable way to be connected to the City and the community. He wished everyone well.

**NEXT MEETING  
DATE:**

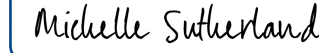
The next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, February 13, 2025.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Commissioner Schneider moved, seconded by Commissioner Chard, to adjourn the meeting at 6:22 p.m. A voice vote approved the motion.**

Signed by:  
  
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Blake Chard, Chair

Signed by:  
  
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Michelle Sutherland, Secretary Chief Examiner

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President  
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