

Meeting of the Civil Service Board

Present: Chair Ron Chapman, Jr., George L. Allen Jr., Johnny L. Clark, Michelle L. Collins, Walter Laidlaw, Albert T. Turner

Absent: Pat Parrish

Attendees:

Frantisek Benes, Water Utilities Department Employee
Jose Blanco, Rehire Applicant
Louie Bright, Assistant Chief, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department
Eugene Campbell, Assistant Chief, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department
John Cantu, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department
Debra Carlin, Assistant Chief, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department
Jeff Culver, Lieutenant, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department
George Florence, Captain, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department
Isaac McClelland, Battalion Chief, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department
Janice Moss, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Gabriel Ortiz, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department
D.D. Pierce, President, Dallas Firefighters Association
Ayeh Powers, Assistant City Attorney
Michael Powers, Rehire Applicant
Diana Salinas, Dallas Fire-Rescue Department

Civil Service Department Staff:

Michelle Hanchard, Assistant Director
Patricia Marsolais, Secretary to the Civil Service Board
Pamela McDonald, Manager – Examining and Recruitment Division
Martha Santos, Executive Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m.

The Chair welcomed the new Board Members: Johnny Clark, Michelle Collins, Walter Laidlaw and Albert Turner. The members described a little bit about themselves for the audience and record.

George L. Allen, Jr., was unanimously elected as Vice-Chair.

The minutes of the December 1, 2009 regular meeting were unanimously approved.

The Board heard the rehire appeal of former Dallas Police Department employee Jose Blanco. After much discussion with Mr. Blanco about his previous employment with the City and consideration of material provided for the Board's review, the Board unanimously approved his request to apply for employment opportunities with the City.

The Board heard the rehire appeal of former Dallas Fire-Rescue Department employee Michael Powers. After much discussion with Mr. Powers about his previous employment with the City and consideration of material provided for the Board's review, the Board unanimously approved his request to apply for employment opportunities with the City.

Assistant Chief Carlin and Captain George Florence appeared on behalf of the Dallas Fire-Rescue Department to request the extension of the Fire-Rescue Trainee eligibility list until October 31, 2010. The current list will expire on April 15, 2010 unless extended. Chief Carlin explained the long process it takes to process candidates until a final list of eligibles for hire is established. Over 280 candidates remain on the list. Thus far 76 people have been hired out of this group. Due to budgetary constraints a decision was made not to request the entry level test be given during the 2009-2010 fiscal year. If the budget will allow, the Fire-Rescue Department would like to hire 50 more recruits before October 31, 2010. With no objections to the request, the Board voted unanimously to extend the list.

Assistant Chief Eugene Campbell, Assistant Chief of Homeland Security for the Dallas Fire-Rescue Department, briefed the Board on a method proposed for testing candidates for the position of Dispatcher. Chief Campbell stated that the department started looking into the selection process in 2005-2006. Up until that time the department had never used a process specific to the criticality of being a fire dispatcher. After researching the issue, the department selected a dispatch-specific test called Criticall. Chief Campbell proposes moving the administration of the Criticall test for dispatchers to the Civil Service Department to ensure that the correct testing environment is assured. In addition, the Fire Department recommends eliminating the formal interview process. When questioned by Dr. Collins about this, the Chief indicated that the Human Resources and Civil Service Departments had reviewed the interview questions and questioned the extent to which they are job-related. Biddle, the consulting firm that did the nationwide validation study of Criticall, leaves the use of an interview process up to its clients.

After a thorough discussion on the issues of moving the administration of the Criticall test to Civil Service and the elimination of a formal interview in favor of an informational one, the proposed selection process was unanimously approved by the Board.

Firefighter Gabriel Ortiz addressed the Board on his disagreement with the denial of his grievance by the Secretary concerning the May 2009 written examination for Fire-Rescue Lieutenant as being untimely. Mr. Ortiz alleges that by not setting a passing score for the written examination, he was harmed because everyone who took the test moved onto the Oral Assessment portion of the examination. He believes that his placement on the final combined list of eligibles would be different if some candidates had failed the written test. Based on the date of the written examination and the date the final combined written scores were posted, months had passed since Mr. Ortiz first became aware that a passpoint panel was not used to provide data in setting a raw written score. His grievance was ruled untimely by the Secretary and thus, not eligible to be heard by the Board under the Personnel Rules. The Board did allow Mr. Ortiz to address the Board and provide all information he wanted the Board to have.

The Board approved the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 Annual Report to the Mayor and City Council with amendments suggested by the Chair.

The Secretary presented the Board with a Probationary Extension Report. This report outlines the requests departments have submitted to extend employees' probationary periods for miscellaneous reasons such as military duty, injury, illness, additional training, et al. There is no action required by the Board.

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The Secretary advised the Board that the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 budget process has begun. Under the Price of Government model, departments compile funding requests (i.e., bids) and submit them. They are reviewed by results teams linked to key focus areas identified by the City Council that make funding recommendations to the City Manager. The Civil Service Department bids will be reviewed by the E³ (Efficiency, Effective & Economical) Government Results Team. The budget process is in the early stages at this time. The Secretary will regularly brief the Board on the process as it progresses.

The Board went into Executive Session from 9:45 to 10:00 a.m. pursuant to Section 551.074 of the Texas Open Meetings Act to discuss the Secretary's Fiscal Year 2009-2010 goals and objectives. There was no action taken by the Board.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

(A complete transcription of this meeting is available)

ATTESTED

APPROVED