

Chehalis Civil Service Commission

Minutes of January 31, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joe Mano, Sheila Johnson-Teeter, Dennis Dawes

OTHERS PRESENT: Deputy Chief McKnight, Chief Hendershot, Rob Gebhart

Meeting was called to order by Chair at 7:00 P. M.

Minutes of December 27, 2022 were approved as published. Dawes/Johnson-Teeter

The first item on the agenda was a discussion of the position of Chair of the Commission. According to the Rules and Regulations, a chair should be elected on even number years. No action was taken.

The Secretary presented updated eligibility lists from the Police Entry Level and Police Lateral to the Commission members. There is no current Fire Department list.

Chief Hendershot addressed the Commission and made a request to change the wording in the Rules and Regulations so that a promotional test for Captain in the Fire Department could be a written test or through the use of an Assessment Center or a combination of both processes. He gave a list of reasons:

A written test is available through PST. The process from PST was started from Chief Cardinale and has used resources from the department, including a fire house booklet.

Commissioner Dawes stated that, as someone who has knowledge of such tests, he remembers that often the tests are more appropriate for departments as much as ten times bigger than the local department.

Commissioner Mano stated that he believes that someone moving into a leadership position is better tested through an assessment center.

Chief Hendershot stated that a position will be open mid-February after Mr. Reynolds' leaves are exhausted, and a second retirement from Mr. Emerick is due in July. A written test is available and study guides have been made, so the Chief would like to administer it on February 22.

Commissioner Dawes: it does take longer to set up an Assessment Center, but it can be made to fit the department, can deal with building codes, various department procedures, and he hopes that any test given will fit the department.

Chief Hendershot suggested that perhaps an exception could be made for this test since time is crucial.

Commissioner Dawes stated he favors an Assessment Center.

Commissioner Mano stated he was not in favor of changing the rule or making an exception in this case.

Captain Gebhart stated he has several concerns:

To prepare for an Assessment Center, in the past, the department members have worked together.

This test has the potential of promoting two individuals who could then serve as Captain for as much as the next 20 years.

Some written tests are difficult for some personnel to take, just checking answers out of a guidebook, limited time constraints, and that the written exam may not cover general tactics, evaluations, speech activities, personnel issues and perhaps an in-basket activity.

Deputy Chief McKnight read part of an RCW that lists the duty of any testing process to be practical and fair to all involved.

Commissioner Dawes: the RCW says that the choice of the Commission must meet those requirements and make sure the testing processes fit the department. He asked Chief Hendershot how many candidates are interested in the test.

Chief Hendershot did not provide a number of candidates, but he stated that all the candidates have experience now as Acting Captain, so he can appoint temporary Captains until a test is given. He also shared a desire to get the testing process completed before he leaves.

Commissioner Dawes: if the Fire Department has personnel to cover temporary appointments, then there is time to set up a more intensive test that would prevent testing, hiring, then perhaps dealing with an unsuitable hire and having to start the process over again. In the long run, he said, he is in favor of an Assessment Center.

Commissioner Mano: no motion is needed since the Rules and Regulations already require an Assessment Center.

Rules and Regulations were handed out. The changes from the last meeting have been added, but Veterans' Credit needs to be put back in for final review. Deputy Chief McKnight suggested that personnel in the city office could do a final formatting of the R&R and the printing of copies.

Commissioner Mano asked if there were any more Public Comments. There were none.

Commissioner Dawes asked to discuss the meeting times. He proposed changing it to 6:00 P.M. instead of 7:00. He moved, Johnson-Teeter seconded, and motion passed.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at 6 P.M. The Secretary will inform the city to change the time on the Chehalis website and will update calendar list for the Commissioners.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:31 P.M.

Joe Mano  
Chairman

Janelle Williams  
Secretary