

**MINUTES OF POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION  
MEETING OF JULY 20, 2023**

*4:00 p.m.*

*Council Chambers (203 South Farwell Street)*

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MEMBERS PRESENT: Disa Wahlstrand, Stephanie Finn, David Anderson, Kimberly Cronk

MEMBERS ABSENT: Selika Ducksworth-Lawton

STAFF PRESENT: Police Chief Matt Rokus  
Interim Fire Chief Al Bertrang  
Human Resources Director Colleen Schian  
Deputy City Attorney Doug Hoffer  
Fire Captain Tony Biasi

The Commission convened in open session at 4:00 p.m. Meeting was called to order by President Wahlstrand. President Wahlstrand asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the Police and Fire Commission meetings held May 18, 2023. No corrections or additions were noted, and the minutes stand approved as circulated.

Chief Rokus provided a personnel update. Since the May 18, 2023 meeting, there have been two separations, one retirement and one resignation in good standing. There has also been one new hire, Vito Carlo. His swearing in will take place on July 27, 2023 along with three other officers who started in May. A discussion was held regarding the current hiring process. The Department is currently accepting applications for Police Officers and will hold the next written and physical testing process in August with interviews scheduled for September.

A discussion was held regarding the Police Department's updated recruitment efforts. The Department has partnered with a local consulting company to develop new recruiting material including videos, flyers, and an updated website. The materials are being distributed throughout the Midwest.

Chief Rokus also provided an operational update. The 2022 annual report was recently completed and was handed out to the Commission. A brief discussion was held regarding the contents of the report.

A discussion was held regarding the training efforts of the Police Department. In the past five years, 4,050 hours have been invested in leadership development programs. Some of these programs include the FBI National Academy, Southern Police Institute Administrative Officers Program, and Northwestern University's Police Staff and Command College. These programs are usually geared towards leaders who have achieved the rank of Lieutenant or Deputy Chief. Chief Rokus asked if there were any questions regarding the operational updates, none were noted. Interim Chief Bertrang provided a personnel update. Interim Chief Bertrang recommended that, based on the interviews held on June 26, 2023, Tony Biasi be promoted to the Deputy Chief of

Operations and Bob Haller be promoted to Deputy Chief of Prevention. Interim Chief Bertrang also recommended that Brian Dorn and Nick Ledin be promoted to Fire Captain, which were vacancies created by the Deputy Chief promotions. With the vacancies created from the promotions to Captain, Jeff Dahl and Steve Merkel were then recommended for Lieutenant. Lastly, those promotions opened a Fire Engineer position, and Deputy Chief Al Bertrang recommended Andrew Elbert. Commissioner Finn made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, and passed unanimously, to approve the promotions for Deputy Chief and Fire Captain. The promotions for Lieutenant and Engineer were from previous eligibility lists already created by the Police and Fire Commission and did not need additional approval.

Interim Chief Bertrang also provided an operational update. Seven new Fire Fighters recently finished the recruit academy. This means that Fire Station 6 is now fully staffed. It was also noted that all required personnel recently became recertified in their EMS/Paramedic certifications, and everyone is up to date.

A discussion was held regarding the Police and Fire Commission Manual and any updates it may need. Deputy City Attorney Doug Hoffer reviewed the manuals from other municipalities, and brought forward some suggestions to keep the manual current. These included the possibility of creating a separate code of conduct from the City of Eau Claire's general boards and commissions, outlining the hiring process to be more modern, and adding an appendix with all of the changes to the manual. It was noted that the City staff would bring forward these suggestions in time to discuss for the September meeting.

Commissioner Cronk asked if remote meetings are something we wanted to discuss and add to the manual. Deputy City Attorney Doug Hoffer mentioned it is something currently being discussed among City staff, and that we hope to have a clear update the next time we meet on what virtual meetings may look like and if they are possible.

President Wahlstrand asked if there are any future agenda items. It was noted that a series of short trainings presented by Deputy City Attorney should begin at the next regularly scheduled meeting. It was proposed that trainings will begin each meeting with a different topic related to the scope and duties of the Commission. It was also discussed that two Commissioners would be unable to attend the next regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, September 21, 2023. It was decided that due to this conflict, the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, September 19, 2023. Commissioner Cronk made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, and passed unanimously, to approve the change of the regularly scheduled meeting date.

Motion was made by Commissioner Finn to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Cronk and the meeting was adjourned at 4:43 p.m.

The next regularly-scheduled Police and Fire Commission meeting is September 19, 2023 at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Kelsey Brunner, Police and Fire Commission Secretary.