

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Monday, September 20, 2021
5:00 PM

Present: Christine Klein, Chair
Marilyn Sessions, Member

Also Present: Dawn Bishop, CSC Coordinator
Nicholas Shearer, City of Kent, Police Chief
Melanie Baker, City of Kent, Service Director

Call to Order

The regular meeting of the Civil Service Commission was called to order at 5:02 pm on Monday, September 20, 2021, by Christine Klein. Roll call was taken.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES of June 21, 2021 made by Ms. Sessions, seconded by Ms. Klein, and CARRIED by a voice vote of 2-0.

Budget & Finance

Personnel Changes Read.

Safety Administration

Kent Police Department

Personnel Change Read. Some discussion regarding the current climate of law enforcement.

Chief Shearer said there are currently three police officer vacancies. Two new hires are starting in the next couple of days but that still leaves one vacancy and the list is exhausted. He is hoping to use an internet based testing module called National Testing Network and hopes to draw in some candidates from larger cities who may be looking for a smaller city police job. He said also to be frank the City of Kent's PD is looking at diversifying their force. Kent State recently gave an internet based police officer exam and had applicants from New York City, Chicago, Portland. So perhaps those large cities' losses could be our gain.

Ms. Sessions inquired about the current cost of testing for Kent and Chief Shearer said \$10. He continued that the cost will go up for that initial test to \$55 at NTN if they do not meet qualifications for subsidizing the exam. National Testing Network advertises on their site and those already using NTN will see immediately when we advertise. Chief Shearer said he is pretty fearful for the numbers that may come out for the police officer exam and is hoping the ease and reach of National Testing Network will increase the applicant pool. The department is also going to partake in a large recruiting effort this time around.

Ms. Klein asked if we would still advertise along with National Testing's reach and Chief Shearer and Ms. Bishop answered yes.

Ms. Sessions asked if anything beyond the exam is changing i.e. the background checks, neighbor interviews. Chief Shearer said nothing is going to be compromised in the background investigation. Ms. Sessions said what if someone from Chicago applies, you can't go and talk to the neighbors of that applicant. Chief Shearer said he doesn't believe not talking to a neighbor is compromising the process and a lot of times you aren't getting a lot from coworkers, supervisors, personal references and of course they can still talk to all those contacts over the phone.

Ms. Klein asked if NTN proctors the exam, where do we come into play? Ms. Bishop said we work with them on how the posting will read on their site, give them an end date, and then we'll pull scores and create an eligible list after that.

Chief Shearer said the last point he wanted to bring up was altering extra credit that is currently applicable to passing scores on the police officer entrance exam. First off the city had a meeting and agreed there is a racial disparity in the educational system so if we are looking for a more diverse workforce, it would make sense to eliminate the extra credit for college degrees. He said there is essentially no research that indicates a college degree makes an individual a better police officer.

Ms. Sessions asked wouldn't it make sense to have someone who has been through special police training, to give extra points for that and wouldn't that draw extra people that we are looking for? Chief Shearer that goes to his next point: police academy certification is different than a degree. Ms. Sessions asked doesn't everyone have to go through a police academy to be a police officer? Chief Shearer answered yes, but not to be hired. Ms. Sessions said so we do give extra credit for the academy/OPOTA certified? Chief Shearer said yes but he would like to change it from 20% to 10% extra credit.

Ms. Klein asked if the academy extra credit is really necessary if almost everyone applying has been through it and you're expecting officers from big cities: New York, Chicago. Chief Shearer said an out of state officer would not be eligible for that same extra credit. They are not OPOTA certified and would still have to go through some training here in Ohio before hitting the road. An out of state police officer could be offered a job here in Kent, OPOTA will look at their training from whatever state they are from and then tell them what gaps need to be filled in. A lot of times it's only 80 hours or so of makeup training.

Ms. Klein asked where do you cull candidates at: is it this stage, the physical, background, interview? She said maybe you get a bigger pool but are they qualified. Chief Shearer said things probably really shake out in the 18-page background information packet.

MOTION TO ESTABLISH AN ELIGIBLE LIST FOR THE POSITION OF POLICE OFFICER USING NATIONAL TESTING NETWORK TO ADMINISTER THE ENTRY LEVEL EXAM AND ADJUST THE EXTRA CREDIT APPLIED TO PASSING GRADES made by Ms. Sessions, seconded by Ms. Klein, and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 2-0.

Kent Fire Department
Personnel Changes Read.

Service Administration
Personnel Changes Read.

MOTION TO ESTABLISH AN ELIGIBLE LIST FOR THE POSITION OF ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN AND ACCEPT THE UPDATED JOB DESCRIPTION made by Ms. Klein, seconded by Ms. Sessions, and **CARRIED** by a voice vote of 2-0.

Ms. Baker began to explain the need for an eligibility list for Chief Operator at the Water Reclamation Facility. Ms. Baker asked if we could reach out to Class IV WW first. While we do allow those with a Class III four years to complete the Class IV process, if they don't get it, the department is hurting. It's not an easy process and most do not get their Class IV the first time around. An employee who recently tried for their Class IV began with over a 90 page report, so it is like they are writing a thesis. Ms. Sessions asked about the pay range. Ms. Baker said \$26- \$32/hour. Ms. Sessions and Ms. Klein both commented their surprise at that rate of pay and believe that's probably deterring a qualified Class IV

candidate. Ms. Baker said that is something that needs to be addressed and there is a lot of pressure and a lot on the line here for this Chief Operator.

MOTION TO ESTABLISH AN ELIGIBLE LIST FOR THE POSITION OF CHIEF OPERATOR OF THE WATER RECLAMATION FACILITY made by Ms. Klein, seconded by Ms. Sessions, and CARRIED by a voice vote of 2-0.

Ms. Baker's last item was the need to establish a new list for the position of Laborer. They've hired quite a few off the current list and it is now exhausted.

MOTION TO ESTABLISH AN ELIGIBLE LIST FOR THE POSITION OF LABORER made by Ms. Sessions, seconded by Ms. Klein, and CARRIED by a voice vote of 2-0.

Ms. Klein asked if Ms. Bishop had everything needed to advertise the jobs and Ms. Bishop said she believed so, but wanted to note that there are in house exams available for laborer and some administrative or managerial questions could be added to the Water Rec Operator exam for the Chief Operator position, but there was nothing available for Engineering Technician. Ms. Bishop also asked about the time frame to advertise for the Chief Operator at the Water Rec Facility and Ms. Baker said probably a longer time frame of six to eight weeks to make sure those qualified are aware and have time to apply.

Adjournment

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:05 PM made by Ms. Klein, seconded by Ms. Sessions, and CARRIED by a voice vote of 2-0.

Minutes approved: 11.15.21


Christine Klein


Marilyn Sessions