

**TUMWATER CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
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CONVENE: 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Chair Eric Trimble and Commissioner Simon Tee.

Staff: Secretary/Chief Examiner James Trujillo, Police Chief Jon Weiks, and Fire Chief Brian Hurley.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: There were no changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES, JULY 14, 2022 & SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES, JULY 19, 2022:

ACTION: **The minutes of July 14, 2022 were approved as published.**

ACTION: **The minutes of the July 19, 2022 special meeting were approved as published.**

AUGUST STATUS OF ELIGIBILITY LISTS: Chief Examiner Trujillo reported there have been no changes to the eligibility lists since the last update.

POLICE SERVICE SPECIALIST II WRITTEN REPORT ON ELIGIBILITY LIST REJECTION: Chief Examiner Trujillo said that based on Civil Service Rules, when the City does not select a candidate from the eligibility list, the City notifies the Civil Service Commission of such action. He referred to a memorandum from Police Chief Weiks that speaks to the rejection of a candidate.

Chair Trimble asked whether the candidate was notified. Chief Examiner Trujillo affirmed the candidate was notified and had an opportunity to respond.

Chief Examiner Trujillo explained that the candidate did not pass the Chief's interview. Only one candidate was on the eligibility list. The candidate has not responded to the notification nor submitted an appeal.

POLICE SERVICE SPECIALIST II EXAMINATION PLAN – APPROVAL: Chief Examiner Trujillo reviewed the Police Service Specialist II exam plan, which is proposed for adjustment in terms of the method of the evaluation. Civil Service Rules speak to the method of evaluation. The City is proposing moving from a formalized written test as an element of Part 1 of the exam process to a written evaluation conducted by subject matter experts within the City. The intent of the new process is to avoid losing candidates who elect not to participate in a written test. The proposed method meets all the requirements of Civil Service Rules and Guidelines. Candidates must pass the

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minimum qualifications to be considered. Candidates advance to completing a written questionnaire. Candidates are advised that they will be evaluated on the results of the questionnaire. The evaluation process includes standardized responses which are provided to the evaluators to grade candidate responses fairly and objectively. Evaluators of the candidates are not informed as to the identity of the candidates completing the questionnaires. The evaluators receive a standardized sheet of information outlining the desired responses with a score associated with various responses to ensure the process is standardized in terms of the evaluation of the responses from each candidate.

Commissioner Tee questioned the reason for not administering a written test. Chief Examiner Trujillo explained that during the last recruitment for the position, approximately 10%-15% of the applicants who submitted an application and met the qualifications elected not to participate in the written test. Additionally, a number of candidates who affirmed their attendance to complete the written test also did not attend. Often, because of the length of the testing process, the City is losing candidates as they have been hired by other agencies for other positions during the recruitment and testing process. Additionally, the City is evaluating other testing methods. The City currently contracts with a company that uses standardized tests that require in-person testing. The City is evaluating other online-proctored options that are more streamlined with the goal of speeding the recruitment process, as the Police Department needs a quicker recruitment process to achieve successful recruitment results because of market competition. The Police Chief can interview the top seven candidates. The proposed process is estimated to reduce the recruitment process by several weeks.

MOTION:

Commissioner Tee moved, seconded by Chair Trimble, to approve the Police Service Specialist Ii Examination Plan as presented. A voice vote approved the motion.

Commissioner Tee asked whether other organizations are using the same exam plan for similar positions. Chief Examiner Trujillo advised that he is aware some municipalities are using a similar process but would need to make some inquiries as to the specific types of examinations. Recruitment for law enforcement personnel in today's market has been challenging and all agencies are competing for individuals from a limited pool of candidates. The issue is a labor market issue. The exam process is only one method to speed up the recruitment process. The exam plan meets Civil Service Rules criteria for conducting evaluations.

**CIVIL SERVICE
RULES CHANGE
PROPOSAL –
ELIGIBILITY LIST
APPROVALS:**

Chief Examiner Trujillo referred to a prior recommendation to change Civil Services rules enabling the Chief Examiner to approve an eligibility list with the intent of moving the recruitment process forward to address challenges in the current labor market. The change would improve the City's ability to recruit quickly. The Commission had requested a legal opinion with respect to the proposal. He subsequently contacted and submitted the question to MRSC

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regarding the proposal. A copy of MRSC's response is included as an attachment to the staff report. Based on that information, staff revised the proposal to reflect that the Chief Examiner could render a provisional approval of the eligibility list to enable the City to move forward with the recruitment with official approval by the Commission scheduled at the next regularly scheduled meeting. The proposal is for provisional approval of an eligibility list only. City Attorney Kirkpatrick reviewed the information from MRSC and has indicated the proposal as outlined would be acceptable.

Discussion ensued on the proposal. Commissioner Tee advised of his understanding of the current labor market and recruitment challenges but also wants to ensure the proposal is appropriate. He asked about the potential of hiring a candidate prior to the Commission's approval. Chief Examiner Trujillo advised that the circumstance would be extremely unlikely because of the length of the recruitment process.

Chair Trimble noted the possibility of staff offering a conditional job offer pending the Commission's approval. Commissioner Tee expressed support for the option.

Fire Chief Hurley spoke in support of the proposal recognizing that the Fire Department has not experienced the same extent of recruitment issues experienced by the Police Department; however, the Fire Department is facing a very competitive market for paramedic/firefighter candidates.

Commissioner Tee suggested including conditional approval for hiring. Police Chief Weiks explained that adding a provision for a conditional offer would create problems for the background investigation, as state law requires the department to complete the first phase of a two-phased background investigation process. The first phase must be independent of the second phase. At the end of the first phase (personal history & interview), a conditional offer could be afforded based on state law to enable the initiation of the second phase involving medical testing. A provisional approval of the eligibility list enables the Police Department to begin the background investigation, as there would be no job offer to any candidate providing adequate time for the Commission to approve the eligibility list formally.

Commissioner Tee recommended adding language that speaks to no hiring prior to approval of the eligibility list by the Commission.

MOTION:

Chair Trimble moved, seconded by Commissioner Tee, to approve the following change to Civil Service Rule 9.09 "APPROVAL OF ELIGIBILITY LISTS. In normal circumstances, the Commission certifies eligibility lists. In addition, the Commission authorizes the Secretary/Chief Examiner to authorize conditional certification of eligibility lists in the following circumstances: (a) when business needs require timely action for recruitment; (b) or in the event that the

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Commission is unable to meet to certify eligibility; (c) or for continuous recruitment eligibility lists. A report of eligibility list conditional certifications made by the Secretary/Chief Examiner shall be provided to the Commission in the next regular Commission meeting for official certification.” Additionally, add a sentence that no hiring will occur unless the Commission has approved the eligibility list. A voice vote approved the motion.

**NEXT MEETING
DATE:**

The next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, September 8, 2022.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Chair Trimble inquired about the status of appointing another Commissioner. Chief Examiner Trujillo advised that appointments have been offered to several individuals and none have accepted the appointment or they were not eligible to serve based on the rules.

Police Chief Weiks thanked the Commission for its last action, as it will help with the timing of recruitment activity.

Fire Chief Hurley reported on the recent hiring of a paramedic effective August 1, 2022. On September 1, 2022 Paramedic Lieutenant James Osberg will assume the position of Fire Captain-Medical Services Officer and Monti Sorem will assume the position of Paramedic Lieutenant. Another candidate for a paramedic position is scheduled to start on September 1, 2022 and will attend the fire academy on September 12, 2022 as long as the candidate completes all requirements. This is the first time in many months the Fire Department has filled all existing FTEs. He thanked the Commission for its efforts.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Tee moved, seconded by Chair Trimble, to adjourn the meeting at 6:03 p.m. Motion carried.

Eric Trimble, Chair

James Trujillo, Secretary Chief Examiner

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