

MINUTES OF THE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION MEETING
December 23, 2020 – 8:00 A.M.

Members Present: Chairman Jan Naso
Commissioner Tom Kot
Commissioner Christine Higham

Non-Members Present: Mayor Dave Kline
Police Chief Ron Williams
Director of Law Megan Raber

The December 23, 2020 Civil Service Commission meeting was called to order. Minutes of the August 19, 2020 meeting were approved as published.

Chairman Naso acknowledged the Part-Time Firefighter Exam that was conducted on December 15, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. There were 22 applicants, 21 showed up and took and passed the exam and stated that the list goes to Chief Passarelli. **Mr. Naso: I move to certify the Part-Time (Firefighter) Eligibility List from the exam conducted on December 15, 2020. Motion was seconded and passed with no discussion.** Mayor Kline took the list of names along with copies of their applications.

Mr. Naso read a brief report on the Commission's activities for the year 2020. He mentioned the five tests that were administered and included the number of applications received per test, persons actually taking the tests, passing and non-passing scores and number of persons hired from each established eligibility list. He also mentioned the total number of meetings the Commission conducted and that the clerk was off work nearly three months due to the pandemic.

Mr. Naso introduced a discussion on the National Testing Network being considered by the Police Department for recruitment and testing of the Police Officer position. He gave the floor to Chief Williams who stated that he has had an opportunity to speak with different police chiefs around the State and that they are all very impressed, very happy. He stated that what they specifically noted they liked is the interactive portion of the test which is what he talked about. The Chief said that you can measure more than just on a piece of paper because it's computer based and if this is something you might be interested in allowing us to pursue, I would have a conversation with the Law Director and see perhaps about legislation."

Mr. Naso told the Chief everything he has reviewed, he sees no reason not to attempt this and looks like it will increase your recruitment base. The testing will probably be a lot more in depth than what we previously have been using by just a written exam. The applications, the examples you gave us look a little better than the ones we're currently using. I see nothing wrong with that. If we do pursue that, I would also maybe consider changing how we do the eligibility list when it comes to the numbers.

Currently, we give you the top ten names to interview. State Law uses 25%. We legislated that differently to use ten because we have used that for many years before. We did that in Ordinance 28-2012. So, I think in conjunction with doing that, maybe we might want to consider using that 25% number for you with a minimum of ten at any time. That way it'll give you a larger list and I think the way the things are going in the police world, the more candidates you would have to pick from, maybe a better thing. I'm sure that would be something we would need to legislate. As far as doing the actual testing, if that's what we decide to do, I don't know if we need to legislate that or not. That's going to have to be something that the Law Department to figure out.

Chief Williams stated that he would bring her up to speed and see what her thoughts are.

Mr. Naso asked Commissioners Kot and Higham if they had any thoughts.

Mrs. Higham: I have a few questions for Chief Williams and a couple for the Mayor. Are you just looking at this for law enforcement officers or are you looking at this for other positions within the department as well?" **Chief:** Well, at this point, entry-level patrol officer, but we're also going to need a supervisor's test and I am looking at options there. To answer your question, specifically this conversation's about an entry-level, but there is potential for other positions.

Mrs. Higham: Ok, and then the other question I had was how much will this take off your guys plate? I know we were going to agility tests through the university. Does she ever clarify actually for you because I saw agility tests all over their notes as well, but then she said on our conference call they didn't do that. Does she ever clarify what that confusion was? **Chief:** Unfortunately, there were a couple of areas I thought were important, but the rep wasn't all that familiar with. And no, I've not followed up on that. Tri-C, which is one of the locations where they take the test does a physical agility test. I know this for a fact because we had a couple of folks last time come to us with a certificate that lasts for a year. I'm not clear if that is through Tri-C or through this National Testing because they're affiliated. Also, Stark State down in the Belden Village area, they administer tests for them as well. **Mrs. Higham:** And then they also talk about doing the integrity testing. How much could this potentially take off your department's plate and can it speed up your process in any way, shape, or form?

Chief: That's what I'm hoping. I want to talk to some folks about the background process. We do an integrity interview. Currently, we have a couple of officers certified in that process. I want to look and compare what they have versus what we have. Because this is pretty modular, we can pick and choose. I mean we could go as basic as just the test or we could include an integrity interview. Actually, they also have a very large background packet which we do that as well. So, those are things that we can take off. The one thing that we want to maintain though is where our background people actually go out and talk to people, the references, and the neighbors. It is valuable for us to get to know these folks so, we don't want to lose that. But some of these other ancillary functions we could have outsourced.

Mrs. Higham: Okay, do you see it as problematic that they don't have any Summit County sites for testing? They have the virtual that makes it a little bit easier, but I wondered about not having any Summit County sites. **Chief:** I wish it were better, I wish it were different, I think it's growing. It's very large in the Columbus area now and it's getting large nationally. Actually, the only department in this area we're looking at is Brimfield, the only local department using it. There are a couple I think in the Cleveland area. They have a relationship with the OACP, the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police. They're really Columbus-centered because that's where they are, but it is growing here. It's catching on. Actually, many of the departments that are using it are some of the better departments in the State. **Mrs. Higham:** Okay. And then, as I said, there were a lot of questions. Through our last process, I know we haven't done an actual test in a while, but we've used that lateral-entry, so we feel like our candidates are drying up as far as what we can get and what is our main motivation for this? Is it diversity, is it... **Chief:** There are a few large points. I think that the lateral entry has run its course for us. I think we're due for some young blood here. But also, this is a three-part test. There's a written test, a multiple-choice test, but there's also a computer interactive portion of the test that measures things that we can't on a piece of paper. It measures judgment, interaction and so forth. We've actually had a few officers in the course of the last decade here that probably wish we would have had the ability to do that, so there's that. Also, they will help us with recruiting. Recruiting in police work has gotten very tough over the last five or six years and I anticipate with recent developments the younger population has no interest in being a police officer right now. I suspect it's going to be even more difficult. Another concern that we have is we have no minority officers and today we have no female officers, both concerns. They advertise, I can't remember the numbers, but they were respectable. So, several areas where I think they can help us. **Mrs. Higham:** Okay, great. **Chief:** Also, another thing that they offer, instead of having one test date where everybody has to show up and in police work that's important because of shiftwork, especially younger officers. It's more difficult for a younger officer to get a day off. If perhaps they can't get a day off, maybe they can't take the Tallmadge test. Something we could possibly do is open the Tallmadge test for a month and perhaps they do three tests a week for that four-week period giving people 12 opportunities to take that Tallmadge test and then if you end up the period whatever the ranking of that selection is would be our list. Another thing that they do, a candidate who takes their test is valid with them for a year. If you have somebody in the Cleveland area that can't *****the Youngstown area who might be interested in Tallmadge, if they've already taken the National Network Test, they can buy their way onto the Tallmadge List for \$12.00. That is a way to expand our reach and we can tap into maybe the Cleveland market, the Canton market, really anywhere in Ohio. That's another feature. **Mrs. Higham:** Yea and I also saw it in there that they would do opening continuous posting. So, whenever you need to pull a list you have a candidate. Is that something you considered or... **Chief:** I did not. That's something we can think about down the road. I'm just trying to get this moving. A lot of larger departments do that. It's something we can consider, but right now I'm just trying to get it implemented and I think that if opening it for a period, say okay, this four-week period is going to be our test and on January 31, that's going to be our list and talk with the Law Department and decide how to make this go.

Mrs. Higham: Okay. And then the one thing I couldn't get, I know they had in there about weighted scores. **** Is there a way that they calculate our bonus points for education or veteran status? **Chief:** We're all mandated by contract on that subject if I'm not mistaken. We're limited in what we can do and if I'm not mistaken, I think we're 50/50 between written and assessment center. I'm sorry, that's promotion. We're written and then it was 20% military.

Mrs. Higham: Well, I think to take this opportunity to look at some of those things if we do go this route. And how we do business with regard to these postings of these positions. Do you know about how many positions you're expecting to open up over the next year or two?

Chief: I would say a minimum of two. **Mrs. Higham:** Okay. **Chief:** With potential for more, because we have about five employees who could choose to walk away, who are eligible to retire, but nobody has told me that they intend to do that. So really the real answer is anywhere between two and seven. **Mrs. Higham:** Okay. And then my final question. This one I think goes more towards the Mayor. If we're looking at this for law enforcement officers, would it be something we would want to look at Fire too if we're going to pay for the membership for the contract?

Mayor: Absolutely. I think it's a great opportunity. We did talk to them about that being available for other departments and they do testing for everyone. **Mrs. Higham:** Okay. Might as well maximize that money that we have. **Mayor:** And basically, I know Megan was not involved in the first discussion. I think this is just an opportunity that what Pat Ramsey does for us for the testing, this would just be another means of testing and that we would not use Pat Ramsey, but I would be willing to sponsor legislation to change Civil Service Law about the 25%, but I think we should look at the whole ordinance to see if there is anything else besides that 25%. because we do have a Charter Review coming up. Does anything have to happen on the Charter side of it, I don't know yet. **Mrs. Higham:** Yea I think that we have an opportunity to really look at this, especially for these positions as far as how we post, where we post. We can look at our rules and we may want to modify those if we decide to go this route. **Mayor:** Great. **Mrs. Higham:** Thank you Mayor.

Mr. Naso: Cost wise, it's not much different. I think you're talking several hundred dollars.

Chief: We actually mentioned the OACP relationship. They get, I forget the percentage discount. **Mr. Kot:** We have 25%. **Chief:** So, we would only have to pay \$625.00 to join.

Mr. Naso: Anytime we get our written tests now with Ramsey & Associates, it's in the \$600-700 range also. **Chief:** The folks that take the test have to pay a fee which I believe is \$55.00.

Mr. Naso: The cost will be higher for the candidates if we only charge twenty, but I don't think that should be a concern. **Mrs. Higham:** I did see where they offered assistance for candidates who were unable to. I think they had some kind of screening process...reduce fees or if there's a financial need, I think they had some opportunities there, so there would be an alternative if we needed it. Thank you. **Mr. Naso:** Anybody have anything else? **Mr. Kot:** Ron, when you talked about the Tallmadge test, are you still talking about it being administered through the National Testing Network, is that right? **Chief:** Yes. The way that they would do it, the way I understand is that they assist us with the posting, the advertising, everything. And then we can say okay, starting on January 1 and ending with January 31st, people will be eligible to take the test to get on the Tallmadge list and then there's other folks can buy in and then on January 31st whatever that list is, is what you folks can certify.

Mr. Naso: So, at the end of our testing period and of those people that buy into the list, we come up with a list of 75 people...we'll certify it just like we did today and either the top ten or the 25% however it ends up and that's what it would be. And I also just for the record want to make note that this is no reflection on Ramsey & Associates testing process. But this is definitely something we should be looking at, especially for the Police Department. **Mr. Kot:** Well, it seems like it could be cost effective. I just wonder about the extent of our commitment that we have to make to the National Testing; do we have to sign more than a one-year agreement with them? Because we might want to consider that, but it appears that it would give us a broader base for candidates, so I really think it's something we ought to look into for our police officers.

Mr. Naso: We just need some clarification from the Law Department about how we would go about doing this correctly. Anybody else? **Mr. Kot:** By the way, I think that the package for the Marion Police Department that you provided us with is pretty impressive. So, I don't know if we want to look at that to see if that's a way we can model our own... **Chief:** Actually, I've already given that to our background folks with the intent of doing exactly that. **Mr. Naso:** Another nice feature is the disqualifier list that's attached to the posting and stuff would be helpful in making sure the right people are taking the test. Anybody else? So, at this point, we'll just wait to hear from the Law Department about what they think and go from there. **Chief:** Okay, I'll contact Megan.

Mr. Naso mentioned briefly about the application fee being implemented this past year and how well it has worked and how it takes the process of having no cash at the test site out of the way. Mr. Kot mentioned that it gives the candidate a commitment, if they've already spent the \$20 that they have to come to the test.

Mr. Kot: I would make the motion that we nominate Jan Naso to be our Chairman for 2021. For a number of reasons. He's done a great job, his familiarity with this entire process with our Civil Service, not only Statewide, but with our own ordinances is really good. He loves doing it, so I make that nomination. Mrs. Higham: I happily second that nomination and agree with everything Tom said.

Mr. Naso stated that he appreciated their confidence and that he does enjoy doing it and that he has the time do it and accepted the nomination and thanked the other Commissioners.

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Mayor Kline stated that on behalf of the City of Tallmadge, he thanked each member of the Civil Service Commission. He went on to say that this is a very professional group of people doing a great service to the City of Tallmadge and to all our employees and thanked the Commission for their dedication to the City of Tallmadge.

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 a.m.

An audio file of this meeting is available in the Civil Service office.

Jan T. Naso, Chairman

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