

Minutes of the La Porte City Fire Department

Merit Commission

December 7, 2022

The Merit Commission met in person at Fire Station 1. Present were commission members, Miles Fettinger, Dr. James Edwards, Ian Eldridge and Josh Huelat. Chief Andy Snyder, Assistant Chief Kelly Burke, City Councilwoman Julie West and Battalion Chief Doug Biernacki were also in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

A motion to accept minutes from November was made by Josh Huelat and seconded by Ian Eldridge.

Old Business – Chief Andy Snyder reported all annual performance ratings are complete except for his and a review of Assistant Chief Burke's. The Merit Commission will complete Chief Andy Snyder's and review Assistant Chief Burke's following the meeting. Notices of ratings have been sent to each fireman with each having 10 days for appeal.

Chief Andy Snyder reported that Kyle Dant did not make it through the Public Safety Medical evaluation, consequently, the Pension Board decided not to pursue employment with him. Chief Snyder requested the next four names from the applicant list from President Miles Fettinger, which has been sent to the City's Human Resource Department to perform background checks. The City has given approval begin the hiring process for replacements of the three firefighters retiring in January.

Merit commission member Ian Eldridge has been in contact with Rob Shaffer, the teacher for the Fire Science class at the AK Smith Center in Michigan City and has attended an Advisory Committee meeting. Ian shared with the Merit Commission that there was a suggestion for the Merit Commission consider lowering the age for hiring from 21 to 18. This would benefit students who are currently enrolled in the Fire Science program to transition to a career sooner after graduation.

Battalion Chief Doug Biernacki attended the meeting to present recommendations from the Union regarding the implementation of a minimum score for promotional testing. Some additional ideas that were discussed by the Union included credit for certification relevant to the promotion, adjusting percentage to seniority and posting interview scores. The Merit Commission will review and discuss further at the February meeting.

Assistant Chief Kelly Burke reported that he had nothing new to report regarding a process to hire Firefighters who may be employed by another Department but looking to transfer. He will continue to research and talk to more Departments.

New Business – Chief Snyder reported that the Board of Works and Public Safety accepted retirement letters from Wayne Seymour, Stephen Luscomb and Eugene Smith.

They were agreeable in allowing the Merit Commission to begin the hiring process for replacements and promotions to be done sooner.

Miles Fettinger made a motion to adjourn, Josh Huelat seconded at 7:17 PM.

Recorded by Dawn Prater

Alison Zoll Merit Commission Secretary