Asheville Civil Service Board
May 4, 2012 8am
Sixth Floor City Hall

Present Board: Marv Rosen, Larry Harris, and Alan Coxie
Staff: Kelley Dickens, Derrick Swing, and Laura Williams
Guests: Chief Anderson and Councilman Marc Hunt

I. Welcome

- Larry Harris calls meeting to order at 8:00am
- Welcomes City Council Liaison Mr. Hunt and Chief Anderson

II. Approval of March Minutes

- Alan Coxie moves that the minutes from the last meeting be approved.
- Minutes pass unanimously.

III. PD Promotional Process

- Kelley Dickens provides overview of promotional process.
- Notes that there were no ties this year.
- Chief expressed interest in taking top number of candidates and having an interview process and a chance to meet them before making final selection.
- Chief Anderson discusses his 12-13 years of experience with promotions.
    - Part of the final selection process is that Chief interviews top candidates.
    - Questions pertaining to leadership, knowledge, law enforcement, background, and their personnel file is reviewed.
    - Chief wants to make sure he is comfortable selecting the best qualified candidates for position. Take assessment center, personnel file, and interview with Chief into account.
- Kelley gives overview of how rankings were determined. Derrick provides additional detail about promotional process.
- Alan Coxie asks for clarification on the scoring and weighting.
- Larry Harris wants to be clear on weight of assessment center as well as the Chief's input.
- Kelley Dickens provides details on the weighting of the various assessment center components: Written was 30% of final score, Technical/In-Basket/Role Play was 40% of final score; Panel interview was 30% of final score.
    - Notes that Chief's intention is to interview top candidates as ranked by assessment process.
- Marv Rosen asks about composition of APD Promotional Board.
    - Suggested that, like Fire, a certain percentage be allocated to Chief's decision. Chief's input should not disproportionately outweigh the scores of the assessment process.
- Larry Harris asks for the number of people applying for promotion. Chief Anderson notes that 6 Sergeants applied for Lieutenant and 15 officers for Sergeant.
- Larry Harris supports that the Chief should use his discretion to select candidates for promotion as long as a certain number of the top candidates are interviewed.

- Marv Rosen concurs as long as fairness is observed, especially in light of the history of abuses.
- Alan Coxie agrees with other members. Former AFD employee for 15 years and also refers to the history of abuses in past promotional processes. Not certain what CSB is being asked to approve: change weighting 30/30/40 to allot percentage for Chief's discretion?
- Chief Anderson notes that the assessment center process got candidates to the point where the top ones would get interviewed by the Chief.
- Larry Harris asks what the difference is between top candidates in terms of scoring. Suggests that Chief could choose among candidates that were no more than a 5 percent range from the top.
- Larry Harris notes that if there is a stellar candidate that outperformed all others then maybe they should be selected for promotion.
- Kelley Dickens notes that a top performing candidate would still rise to the top during an interview with the Chief. However, the component that is lacking is the Chief's review of the personnel file and that it should be taken into account during the final selection.
- Marv Rosen understands the value of a Chief's interview but would like for us to find some way of making sure it is done fairly and that it is perceived as fair by the troops. Kelley Dickens concurs.
- Derrick Swing talks about attending the APD Promotional Board immediately after the process. He notes that a range of positions was represented with about 7 members of APD as well as the Chief. His impression is that the overwhelming concern was that there was not review of performance on the job and personnel files.
- Marv Rosen notes that we have to assume that there were no significant complaints about the process since no members of the FOP or PBA present to give input. Asks if there is some way to quantify Chief's input?
- Alan Coxie gives an example to illustrate his concern. If top candidate gets passed over for someone who was ranked 3rd but has no quantifiable explanation as to why he or she was passed over. Fire allots 5 percent for Chief's input.
- Larry Harris clarifies that we are only talking about the top candidates. The Chief's discretion would only be applied to the very top, not all the candidates. He would be willing to go along with request.
- Marv Rosen asks that if the candidate ranked 3rd is selected with a wide variation in the promotional process and the candidate ranked 1st grieves, what kind of standard would we use to evaluate whether or not decision was made fairly? Perhaps having some percentage attributed to Chief's input would be of some benefit.
- Chief Anderson would address any grievances with Civil Service Board and articulate why he came to that decision.
- Alan Coxie notes that we need to seek meaningful input that can be quantified. Refer to AFD promotional process. Top 3 list has been problematic in the past with both APD and AFD.
- Kelley Dickens suggests that the Chief's input can be assigned a certain point value system. However, the Chief would still need to justify his reasons to the board.

- Alan Coxie asks if Chief can develop list of criteria with points assigned to each and provide it in advance to CSB.
- Marv Rosen would accept a brief written statement from the Chief stating why someone rated as they did.
- Kelley Dickens states that it would be difficult to quantify why all decisions are made. She notes that, due to general statute, the reason for promotion would be part of public record. Promotional Advisory Board with have to review Chief's criteria and points assigned.
- Alan Coxie notes that he would prefer that there be some way on the front end to quantify what was being assessed by Chief with a small objective list of criteria. If there is a grievance, we have something to refer to.
- Chief Anderson notes that part of the assessment center was to measure certain skills.
- Alan Coxie states that he feels uncomfortable with a blind process for an administrative head.
- Chief Anderson notes that the department head's discretion would be taken away.
- Alan Coxie notes that he is not taking away department head's discretion but would like some way for Chief to justify actions.
- Kelley Dickens refers back to tie breaker process, Chief's interview and review of file can be utilized in lieu of outside panel's interview.
- Marv Rosen asks about time frame.
- Chief notes that there are two vacancies: Captain and Lieutenant. Would like to fill Lieutenant vacancy by July 1.
- Larry Harris refers to 5-person panel interview for tie breaker process. Chief can use intuition to make selection but how do you build it into the process?
- Marv Rosen remarks that "Rule of 3" should not be resuscitated. Alan Coxie concurs.
- Kelley Dickens notes that Civil Service Board is available for staff if they have concerns and Chief will be able to articulate his decisions.
- Chief asks for clarification about how many candidates to interview for one position: 2, 4 or 5? He also notes that he left out 3.
- Larry Harris give additional percentage weight to Chief's discretion and interview or select any candidates within 5 points of top, Chief can pick among those.
- Chief states that he is not satisfied with 5 % discretion on making such an important decision.
- Alan Coxie notes that he does not have a problem with Chief interviewing any of the candidates that applied for promotion as long as he can justify the decision but he needs something objective to evaluate Chief's decision on.
- Responding to Alan Coxie, Larry Harris states that he is concerned that Chief's discretion can outweigh rankings established by assessment center.
- Chief expressed that APD policy states Chief is appointing authority will have final decision. Adding another scoring mechanism would be more problematic for employees versus following policy.
- Marv Rosen asks what Chief's personal belief is about providing feedback to candidate as to why Chief made that decision.
- Chief responds that candidate will get total feedback and be able to review every part of process and also question Chief. Chief has never had a grievance using this process.

Part of Chief's interview with candidate includes asking if process was fair, if they had same opportunity as everyone else that participated in process. Chief's goal is for every eligible individual to have an equal chance to be promoted.

- Marv Rosen asks if candidates know what Chief is looking for in interview.
- Chief notes that they do not. Important that candidates come into interview blindly. suggests that candidates be notified that Chief's interview will include leadership, supervision, field performance, what's going on in field.
- Marv Rosen asks if we can give candidates idea of areas that will be covered in interview without giving details about questions.
- Alan Coxie agrees. Notes that this is exactly what he was looking for, broad categories of what will be asked.
- Marv Rosen notes that we would not need an objective rating from the Chief if we tell candidates what categories are being covered in interview.
- Chief states that he asks 13 questions: career, strengths and weaknesses, career goals, character traits, community policing and implementation, supervisory style, dealing with discipline, dealing with difficult employee, assessment of process, fairness
- Larry Harris is hearing that Chief has discretion to review anybody as long as he has objective standards used to make final decision. CSB would not limit number of candidates reviewed.
- Alan Coxie likes the categories Chief listed.
- Chief asks if Mr. Coxie would also like scoring and Mr. Coxie notes that categories are sufficient.
- Marv Rosen suggests that 13 questions be diluted to 4 or 5 categories to take away specificity so that candidates cannot prepare too much in advance. Alan Coxie agrees.
- Kelley Dickens notes we can decide on the categories today. Notify candidates that **Chief would be conducting final interviews based on: supervision and management, performance (including field performance and personnel file review), leadership, career goals, knowledge of field, community**
- Chief suggests that when candidate is notified about interview, that memo include general categories that will be discussed.
- Alan Coxie moves to approve addition of Chief's interview and personnel file review for the Lieutenant and Sergeant Police Promotional Processes which are to include broad categories of interview topics that the Police Chief will use in the final interview process in selection of the candidate"
- Marv Rosen seconds the motion. CSB approves addition of Chief's interview.

Decisions made: The Chief of Police can

IV. FD Promotional Process and Hiring Update

- Kelley Dickens introduces Holly Waltemyer. She has a Masters in Human Resources and experience with MAHEC and UNCA.
- Holly Waltemyer hands out timeline for current entry level firefighter positions.
- Holly Waltemyer notes that there are 91 applications of entry level FF position.
- Kelley states that applications will be accepted through May 27th. Start date would be July 2nd.
    - There are funds for 15-20 positions to be filled; 245-250 total positions in AFD

- Alan Coxie asks if written test been verified to be objective?
    - Holly notes that we are using FCSI and ERGOmetrics, both have been validated and tested.
- Alan Coxie asks if they comply with NFPA standard for testing and hiring entry level FF. Holly will verify.
- Alan Coxie notes that the physical ability test, if improperly administered, can adversely affect on female candidates.
- Holly responds that the written test will be administered first instead of the physical ability test.
- Holly notes that Kelley suggested that push-ups and sit-ups be eliminated because they were not job-related.
- Holly also added a link to AFD website where they can take practice tests to prepare for written and video-based tests. There is also a listing of physical components.
    - Kelley adds that there will be a video of people completing the physical components
- Alan Coxie states that AFD does not reflect demographics of community. We need to increase number of women applicants
- Alan Coxie wants to make sure that we comply with national standards for hiring.
- Kelley remarks that Chief of AFD is committed to obtaining as diverse a pool of candidates as possible. They are increasing outreach efforts. Also, all applicants that meet minimum qualifications will be administered written test. Notes that AFD is interested in having interested candidates come out to practice before test.
- Alan Coxie asks how much recruitment has been done for women and minority candidates.
- Holly states that orientations are being planned in certain communities
- Kelley notes that we have suggested open houses with HR present to answer questions about physical component.
- Alan Coxie would like recruitment process to include women and minority officers and firefighters to help encourage women and minority candidates
- The AFD has recommended two changes in the fire investigator hiring process. The process has not been done since 2000. AFD estimates 4 or 5 internal candidates meet the recommended qualifications.
    - The proposed minimum requirements for qualification require certification of NC Fire Investigator 2, at time of hire, which used to be probationary. Alan Coxie disagrees with this change. He explains the State's standards on Fire Investigator allow an employee to work in that role while working to get certified within a year. This requirement may limit applicant pool for this position.
        - Larry Harris states we are to leave the probationary requirement of the certification in this process. If the AFD wants to pursue this further they need to bring justification to the board.
    - Weighted scoring increased for Role Play from 15% to 20% and decreased for 360 from 5% to 0%. AFD would like to continue conducting 360 feedback, but it will no longer have an affect on the hiring decision
        - Board approves Senior Specialist (Fire Investigator) weighted scoring changes of Role Play at 20% and 360 feedback at 0%.

    - Board would like input from AFD about change in certification requirement.

V. Brief Water Resources Update

- Kelley Dickens shared that dept. (Steve Shoaf) has been making efforts to communicate with employees about where things are and what expectations are moving forward.
- The study committee's recommendation was that water system be taken on by MSD or create a new regional authority.

VI. Asheville Way Awards Overview

- Derrick Swing explained we used to participate in Excellence in Public Service award ceremonies with other regional governments who no longer wished to take part.
- The City redesigned this recognition program based on the Asheville Way Core Values. Any employee could nominate any employee from another level/department.
- Chairman Harris and last year's winners formed committee to select 2012 winners..
- The winners were: Ivan Thomas, Continuous Improvement; Jerry Hill, Integrity; Doug Zuent, Diversity; Michelle Massey-Smith, Safety; Chris Maloney, Excellent Service; Joy Ponder, Outstanding Leadership; Janet Dack, Above and Beyond; Zack McTaggert, Rising Star; US Cellular Center Team, Outstanding Teamwork

VII. Benefits Update

- Kelley Dickens gave a benefits update using the presentation used at a recent supervisor meeting
- 2011-2012 saw a decrease in Medical and Pharmacy claims from previous couple years
- In July 2011, the City began covering same sex domestic partners
- Over 90 percent of employees completed Health Risk Assessment and participate in wellness track (discount on insurance premiums)
- 245 tobacco users were identified. All but 6 agreed to participate in cessation efforts. Classes have been held at Water Resources, Public Woks, City Hall and Fire Department. Not all 245 employees will be reached this fiscal year but they will be reached on an ongoing basis.
- A part time Physician's Assistant has been added to Health Services. Health Services visits have increased over 100% since she was added in the fall 2011.
- Participation in the Asheville Project increased with over 50 new enrollees since July 2011
- In an effort to ensure the City of Asheville is investing its money wisely and due to difficulties with our Third Party Administrator (TPA) an RFP was issued in January 2012.
    - Over 15 responses were reviewed
    - Some criteria used in reviews were ease of administration, employee satisfaction, administrative cost, and network costs.
    - Four finalists presented on site
    - BCBSNC's network and negotiated discounts would produce a substantial savings
    - 12 months of claims data was sent to two actuary firms for analysis. When analyzed with BCBSNC's network, they estimated savings between $600,000 and $1.1M.
    - BCBSNC has higher administrative fees. HR has negotiated those costs.

    - City Council approved TPA change as of July 1, 2012
- Employees will use BCBS Benefit Focus tools for online benefits enrollment instead of ESS which will be much easier
- BCBS will assume network management for range of benefits which will significantly reduce number of vendors.
- Finalists were CoreSouce (current TPA), BCBS, Health Scope (TN, used by Mission), CWI (SC, small but flexible).
- Marv Rosen asked how the estimated savings and higher administrative costs would be measured.
    - HR gets claims data and administrative costs on a monthly basis. They will continue to monitor that data.
    - The BCBS contract is for one year. Another TPA change can be considered if needed
- Bidding out stop/loss insurance. Workers comp doesn't fall into TPA provider change.
- Alan Coxie asked Kelley how she felt about the number and quality of RFP respondents.
    - Kelley was really impressed with the number and quality.
    - Health Scope and BCBS were really close. Pros and cons were reviewed for both
    - Health Scope would have provided a more segmented system than BCBS
    - It was a very thorough and competitive process

VIII. HR Update

- HR is in the process of hiring a new Training/Development staff member.
- Adam Diaz will start working on annual report. He will reach out to board for information to include in annual report

IX. Other business

- Larry Harris will not be attending June meeting

X. Adjourn

- Adjourned at 9:58 am by Larry Harris