

Civil Service Board Meeting

11/7/13

Board Members Present

Marv Rosen

Alan Coxie

Carolyn Worthington

Lynn Moffa

Virginia Robinson

Staff and Guest Present

Chief Scott Burnette – Asheville Fire Dept.

Kelley Dickens – HR Director

Derrick Swing – Human Resources Manager

Holly Waltemyer – HR Consultant/Recruiter

Marv Rosen (Civil Service Chair): Welcome. First item is the approval of July minutes.

Alan Coxie: Makes a motion to approve minutes for July 2013.

Virginia Robinson: seconds motion.

Board approves

Marv Rosen: Next is the approval of October minutes.

Alan Coxie: Makes a motion to approve minutes for October 2013.

Virginia Robinson: seconds.

Board approves.

Chief Burnette: Fire Department Promotional Advisory Committee met on October 28th. There were two requests for changes to promotional processes that I request the Board's review.

First is the Engineer process. They are primarily responsible for operating the apparatus and drive to emergency calls, maintain equipment on the truck and perform as a firefighter. They have competitive promotional processes.

(See attachment A) You will see the current multipliers for each category. The committee has recommended changing the pumping skills from 25% to 30%, the written test from 30% to 20%, and the driving skills evaluation from 25% to 30%. The feedback the committee had received is that they felt there should be a heavier weight on the hands-on technical skills rather than the cognitive. The cognitive involves hydraulics and DMV laws, etc. They felt it was more important how well the candidate could operate the truck and provide water to the firefighters. They felt these things had a

higher level of importance and the written should have a lower level of importance. We provide these for review from the Board.

Lynn Moffa: Who is on the advisory committee?

Chief Burnette: The Promotional Advisory Committee was established in 2005. It consists of 8 members: 4 are employee elected, 4 appointed by the Chief. All Fire employees vote for two members in a December annual election. The top two vote getters serve a two year term. These appointments are staggered two year terms. The 4 appointed by the Chief serve a one year term. I have always chosen the next four top vote getters for the Chief appointments. So truly, it is an employee elected committee. We meet quarterly or more as needed. The purpose is to make recommendations to the Chief as to minimum requirements for processes and the structure of the process itself.

Lynn Moffa: So you are not on the committee, they just make recommendations to you?

Chief Burnette: That is correct. There has not been a recommendation in my four years as Chief that they have made that I have not implemented. We are fortunate that the committee has been made up of very proactive and active members. They research best practices, seek input from all levels, and make sound recommendations. It is advisory but I value it heavily. The committee is made up of all levels of the organization. This change was unanimous and I also support it.

Lynn Moffa: When was the last time these were changed?

Chief Burnette: 2006. With one exception, the structured interview was added two years ago to add a component that could measure for well they might represent the department as possible leader. They had changed the performance evaluation factor from 15% to 5%.

Alan Coxie: Who is currently on the committee?

Chief Burnette: Bradley Duncan- Engineer, Herman Olson –Engineer, Barnaby Rakes –Sr Firefighter, Matt Balance –Sr Firefighter, Wes Rogers – Captain, Joy Ponder- Battalion Chief, Stephen Burnette- Lieutenant, Patrick Crudup – Lieutenant.

I do support it. Half the written component is hydraulics and half is DMV laws. These are important but the hands-on being a higher weight seems a better fit since that is the more critical role of the position.

We use an outside vendor, FPSI, for our hydraulics portion of the test. They provide a recommended cutoff score, typically 70-72%.

Holly Waltemyer: The written is 50 questions from FPSI and 50 questions from DMV for a possible 100 points.

Marv Rosen: Where is Engineer in the department's career ladder?

Chief Burnette: Engineer is the first competitive promotion. It is a promotion from Sr. Firefighter. There are a limited number of positions, one per company, per shift. Next step on ladder would be the

Company Officer. Engineer is in charge in absence of Company Officer and typically operates the truck and establishing water to the firefighters. They do occasionally function in a firefighter role.

Marv Rosen: It seems the intellectual component should be important. Was that weighted by the committee?

Chief Burnette: Yes. The understanding of hydraulics and pumping up elevations and ability to do quick calculations is important. The actual performance of that is measured in the pumping skills evaluation. Understanding the theory and physics of hydraulics is important but being able to deliver it on the scene was more important to the committee.

Lynn Moffa: How do you perform the pumping skills evaluation?

Chief Burnette: We have outside assessors from other fire departments and 6 stations with different scenarios – elevation/size of line/water nozzle - and measurements. They have to perform the function in real time on the training ground just as they would live. The candidates know how they will be measured. They also complete a test required by the state as a driver/operator. Takes a candidate 90 minutes to finish the 6 stations.

Alan Coxie: Historically, the hydraulics section is the hardest part. I have had experience making calculations on the spot at the Public service building which is 8 stories tall. Not a lot of drivers can do that. My concern is that the hydraulics is getting its fair due, are you comfortable that it is?

Chief Burnette: Yes sir, I do. They have to do these calculations in their head in a practical format.

Marv Rosen: How do you use your 5% Chief discretion?

Chief Burnette: That has been part of the process for 10 or 11 years. I have only used that one time. I have given the same zero score. On time in a Deputy Fire Marshall process, I awarded points as a tiebreaker when a candidate had volunteered out-of-class. All had been offered the opportunity and one candidate stepped up. I have no intention of using it unless as a tie breaker.

Marv Rosen: My only concern is if that 5% was used for something other than a merit based.

Chief Burnette: I agree completely. That's why I have only assigned points that one time. Our processes are robust and are best predictor of future performance.

Marv Rosen: Appreciate your diligence in how you apply that since it has the potential to be misused

Lynn Moffa: My only concern is that we are giving higher weight to more subjective factors than objective. To what extent are the other skills evaluated by objective standards?

Chief Burnette: Very objective. Candidates are aware of what will be measured of about 25 different components. Candidate has to secure vehicle at beginning, etc. The evaluator uses checklists and whether tasks are completed or not at each station. Evaluators are in pairs in case one has missed

something. Calculations are asked for and given verbally (consideration for size/length/nozzle/elevation). There is one correct answer. I feel they are very objective.

Our next process will begin in August.

Marv Rosen: Let's look at the second recommendation before deciding on this one.

Chief Burnette: The Assistant Fire Marshall supervises 3 to 4 Fire Marshalls. They have plans review and code enforcement responsibilities. They also have a leadership role in the department. They supervise and deal with citizens and development community, some difficult situations.

(See attachment B) The process did not have a strong measure of leadership skills. We had been using a role play scenario based on an interaction with a business owner. The recommendation is to change that to a presentation. The plans review responsibility and frequency of leading meetings is what we want to measure more accurately. All would be given the same topic, structured guidelines, and we would have external assessors. It would measure the technical knowledge and the ability to deliver the message and answer questions.

Lynn Moffa: So the only difference would be you would have them present based on a scenario to a group rather than interact as in the role play?

Chief Burnette: Yes. The role play would be an interaction with an individual. We feel the presentation would be more consistent with their duties and they would be doing this more frequently.

Marv Rosen: Seems to me that the presentation is measuring community relations skills. How are you measuring their true leadership skills to be a manager?

Chief Burnette: Excellent question. As the subject matter expert assisting the public to make sure the development goes in everyone's best interest, they are that leader who is ultimately responsible for that project. They would have to explain in the presentation how each member of the team they supervise will help through that project. It is more of the leadership of that project and the team through that project rather than the managerial aspect.

Alan Coxie: I'm struggling with this one too. I'd like to see the role play retained. It seems important that they be able to manage conflict. I also see the importance of a presentation. I don't see either measuring leadership skills. I think you need all three: leadership, role play, and presentation.

Chief Burnette: One place that is measured is the structured interview. It has management tactics and philosophy components. It includes scenario questions – how do respond to problems with employees or citizens? How do you deal with discipline issue? Conflict between two employees?

The professional credentials also measures education in those areas through professional development in those areas. The 360 degree feedback does not carry weight since it is very subjective but it is a very

good tool to allow candidates to examine their strengths and weaknesses in those areas. It's anonymous and can be helpful.

Marv Rosen: Are these components in the order in which a candidate moves through them?

Chief Burnette: No. It is based on availability of assessors and space. Typically get technical writing exercise first but have the whole length of the process to finish. The 360 is given to their peers, subordinates, supervisors. The Inbox exercise measures the ability to prioritize based on 20 given tasks.

Marv Rosen: Does this meet the standards of any professional organizations?

Chief Burnette: NFPA 1021 is the national consensus guidelines but nothing specific to the Fire Marshall position or components. It gives a list of JPR's. This measures those skill sets. CPSE also has a Fire Marshall designation which uses these same measures.

Lynn Moffa: I assume this was the same committee and it was unanimous and you support it?

Chief Burnette: Yes mam.

Alan Coxie: Would there ever be a time or item that you wouldn't support?

Chief Burnette: Yes. I've not done it yet. If the recommendation were not equitable or not a measure of selecting the best person for that position. If it had unfair advantages or was arbitrary, I would not support it. The committee does a good job of reviewing these things.

Lynn Moffa: Who grades these presentations?

Chief Burnette: Outside assessors from the state of NC. Normally, others who are in this role.

Alan Coxie: Do you assess for disparate impact on minorities or women?

Chief Burnette: Our products carry these credentials and measured by the vendors. We do not have a formal professional evaluation for the interview process but our HR department is plugged into the process. HR uses best practices and they have consistently given us good guidance. That is our professional oversight internally. There has not been disparate impact from our scores according to the vendors. We get a report on that.

Alan Coxie: Would you share with us how the vendors measure this?

Kelley Dickens: We can share as much as the vendor would allow us to given it is their product.

Marv Rosen: I have always been impressed with the fairness of the Fire department processes. But also, the cost can get really expensive with getting evaluators and purchasing the materials. Is the City getting a good deal?

Chief Burnette: Our process is that the external evaluators do not charge. We do pay their expenses as far as meals and any overnight. There is no cost. We provide assessors for other fire departments as

well. It's a wonderful development opportunity for our folks. The products are very reasonable for what we get in return. Using outside vendors, we get security, consistency, employee confidence in equity. They deliver exams sealed to HR and graded and scored by external vendor. We use two different vendors due to evaluating price for different products and assessments.

Alan Coxie: I make a motion to approve the changes to the 2013 promotional process for Engineer.

Seconded and unanimously approved.

Alan Coxie: I make a second motion to approve the changes to the 2014 promotional process for Senior Specialist Assistant Fire Marshall.

Seconded and unanimously approved.

Alan Coxie: One more thing...I had an opportunity to review the Fire departments response to the accident on the Smoky Park highway. You all do an excellent job.

Chief Burnette: Thank you.

Other business:

Marv Rosen: We need to approve a Vice Chair. Mr. Coxie is currently serving in that position. Any discussion?

Alan Coxie: I would be honored to serve again and allow my name to be submitted.

Marv Rosen: Any other interest? (silence). I would be happy to nominate Mr. Coxie. Is that for one year?

Virginia Robinson: I think it goes with the Chair's term. (confirmed)

Marv Rosen: I nominate Alan Coxie. All in favor? (all respond affirmative). All opposed? (silence)

Unanimously approved.

Marv Rosen: Any other discussion?

Derrick Swing: We have agreed upon a date for the upcoming grievance – December 17th. We will send out limited information and list of witnesses to ensure no conflicts of interest.

Marv Rosen: I would like to state some appreciation and acknowledge the Asheville Police Department for what it has gone through over the past week in dealing with the loss of Officer Bingaman. Everyone has been very professional and supportive in reaching out to the troops and the family. I would just like to extend my appreciation for that.

Kelley Dickens: We can share that with APD in whatever way you would like. I would like to thank my HR staff in making sure everyone had the resources they needed with EAN and benefits for the family. Emphasizes how important it is we all work together.

Alan Coxie: I would like to point out that I had worked with Officer Bingaman personally. I found him to be very professional and enjoyable to work with and consider this a great loss.

Marv Rosen: Motion to adjourn meeting. Unanimously in favor.

CSB 11/7

(B)

ASHEVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT		
2013 PROMOTIONAL PROCESS SUMMARY		
Sr. Specialist (Assistant Fire Marshal)		
CURRENT		MULTIPLIER
COMPONENT		<i>Sr. Specialist (Assistant Fire Marshal)</i>
1	Structured Interview	20
2	Professional Credentials	20
3	Role Play Scenario	20
4	Technical Writing Exercise	20
5	In Box Exercise	15
6	360 Feedback	0
7	Past four evaluations	5
8	Fire Chief's Discretion	5
TOTALS		105
PROPOSED		MULTIPLIER
COMPONENT		<i>Sr. Specialist (Assistant Fire Marshal)</i>
1	Structured Interview	20
2	Professional Credentials	20
3	Presentation	20
4	Technical Writing Exercise	20
5	In Box Exercise	15
6	360 Feedback	0
7	Past four evaluations	5
8	Fire Chief's Discretion	5
TOTALS		105