

**City of Tacoma Civil Service Board  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**Date and Time:** January 9, 2020 at 5:00PM  
**Location:** Tacoma Municipal Building, Council Chambers  
**Chair:** Beckie Summers  
**Coordinator:** Wendy Hobson

**Call to Order:**

Chair Summers called the Civil Service Board Special meeting to order in Council Chambers of the Tacoma Municipal Building at 5:00PM. Board Members, Hansen, Sexton, Heller and Andrews were present.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Chair Summers asked for a motion to approve the December 5, 2019 minutes. Board Member Sexton motioned to approve and Board Member Hansen seconded the motion.

A VOICE VOTE WAS TAKEN: 2 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABS (SEXTON, ANDREWS) THE MINUTES FOR DECEMBER 5, 2019 WERE APPROVED AS WRITTEN.

Board Member Sexton motioned to begin with Item 7 on the agenda, Human Resources Director Report and Requests. Chair Summers, hearing no objections invited Assistant Human Resources Director, Shelby Fritz to share this report.

Assistant Director Fritz reported on one list extension for Facilities Maintenance Mechanic.

Human Resources Analyst, Lynn Stehr began to present the first of three Requests for Waiver of Competitive Examinations for Click! Employees transitioning into other classifications.

Board Member Hansen motioned to approve all three of these motions without further explanation from Ms. Stehr stating these are excellent employees in need of other positions. Board Member Heller seconded the motion.

A VOICE VOTE WAS TAKEN: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABS. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chair Summers invited these employees up to the podium to introduce themselves. Derrek Whitfield and Kristi Williams expressed their appreciation to the Board for this opportunity. Hollie Seamster Coates, Supervisor of Customer Solutions Team also thanked the Board for allowing Kristi Williams to join her team.

Chair Summers invited Human Resources Analysts, Jessica Madrigal and Lynn Stehr to begin their presentation on Police and Fire testing.

Jessica Madrigal introduced Deputy Fire Chief Mike Pappuleas; Lynn Stehr introduced Assistant Police Chief, Mike Ake.

Ms. Madrigal referenced the material in the Board's packets indicating they had provided information that outlined how both Police and Fire do their testing for promotional examinations.

Chair Summers advised there were specific questions and it may be more valuable to know where the Board is on this subject and why they requested that this come before them.

Board Member Hansen referenced an appeal that had come before the Board several months ago that involved some Police Lieutenants that were taking the Captains test. There were allegations that some officers had selected a book that would be the subject of some test questions and that they gave this book to a couple of Lieutenants prior to the test while others did not have the same opportunity. It was requested that these questions be removed; wondered if the HR Department was aware and what steps were taken to prevent this from occurring in the future.

Ms. Stehr indicated that in the scenario outlined, an interdepartmental memo sent out to candidates eligible to promote and that the memo referenced a multitude of materials that "may" be used on the test. The book was one of those materials. There were no specific questions drafted at this time. Completely separate from Human Resources, some candidates were selected to attend a training class where the book was used as a resource. Therefore, some thought that these candidates were given the book ahead of time; as a response to this, we removed the book as a resource and no questions were drafted. We have not changed our process; candidates are still given a list of resources that we use to draft questions ahead of time.

Board Member Hansen stated there was an allegation that these two officers that were higher up in the hierarchy knew that there were going to be questions on that particular book so they encouraged these two Lieutenants to take the class, were you aware of that allegation. Ms. Stehr indicated she was not aware of this allegation.

Assistant Director Fritz advised that she was the one who took the initial complaint from the candidate who went to the Civil Service Board; I believe it was speculation on his part that it was special treatment. I can tell you that when he came to me, I immediately called the Police Department and told them about the issue with the book and they had already taken care of it by removing the book from the process. I believe they did everything they could to keep the process fair.

Board Member Sexton added that the allegations that we received; there were actually numerous allegations, or a few other allegations reported on the complaint to the Police Department; were they investigated and how. What was the process?

Chair Summers stated that their concerns are more about how it is determined what resources to use and not use. We are also talking about Fire here; who decides what specific resource is used and how is that decided.

Ms. Madrigal indicated for Fire, specific policies related to the specific job classification they are applying for in the promotional. Ms. Stehr shared that at Police it is heavily policy driven; they have to know a lot of policy and procedure. They study right out of their own policy and procedure guide. An example is Police Captain. They work community events, which require leadership skills. We look for training resources in the police realm that touch on leadership capabilities. We also look at the classification and the duties of that classification when choosing resources for the test questions. Candidates may or may not have been exposed to these resources and this is why we provide them with a list of resources in advance.

Chair Summers added that the philosophy of the Police and Fire Departments is set by the Chief; based on that, you talk about somebody who does community service, somebody who does protocol and procedure; and the police in particular have taken a different theory; it is no longer the broken window theory, which was years and years ago. I am wondering how this helps to get the officers the resources they need to let them know where they are headed; I'm sure it's evolved and there's a brand new book today that I should know about if I'm a cop.

Ms. Stehr answered, yes and no. When she first came to the police department, her first Captain's exam in 2016, the focus of the department at that time was Project Peace. Of course, Project Peace was a source of some of the questions; they had mandatory meetings on Project Peace that they had to attend; there was policy and procedures on this and it is not that questions were just pulled out of the air; it really is driven by what is happening at the police department in that moment.

Board Member Andrews said she is interested in process. My recollection is that a couple of candidates were asked to submit supplemental; or resume and that he was not asked; but then he was given the option. My question is if the option to submit supplemental information is on the recruitment announcement. I see there is a job announcement; on that announcement, does it identify all the information candidates were to submit as supplemental information such as a resume. Ms. Stehr's response was that the job announcement did ask for supplemental information, cover letter and resume but this had not been past practice. She added that Police Captain was the highest ranking commissioned officer position in the department and we (Human Resources) felt that applications submitted with just the basic information didn't expound on their entire career. Locals 6 and 26 challenged the new requirement to submit a cover letter and resume as they felt it was a change in working conditions so this requirement was removed. The person you are talking about in particular did not submit his cover letter or resume as requested in the job announcement and I spoke to him about this.

Board Member Andrews asked when the announcement closes, what determines which group moves forward and which group does not. Ms. Stehr indicated the Human Resources Analyst

determines which candidates meet minimum qualifications and then advances them to the next step in the process whatever that may be. Board Member Andrews questioned if that criteria is determined before the closure of the exam period. Ms. Stehr replied yes, that minimum qualifications are in the classification specification and in the job announcement. Board Member Andrews followed with question on how it is determined on how many make the cut relative to going forward. Ms. Stehr stated that all who meet minimum qualifications move forward to next step and explained the next steps. There is a written exam; candidates that pass the written exam advance to the next step in the process, which is the oral board. Board Member Andrews asked who selects the members of the oral board and who picks the questions. Ms. Stehr responded Human Resources together with the department develop the questions and the oral board members are pulled from other agencies mostly outside of Pierce County. Ms. Madrigal added that the ranking for Fire is Rule of one and is a combination of written and oral 60/40.

Board Member Hansen stated the oral portion of the test is subjective to some extent to the written portion; do you agree with that. Ms. Stehr indicated yes, it is more subjective than this is the correct answer to a specific test question. Board Member Hansen asked how many members are on the oral board. Ms. Stehr replied usually three. Board Member Hansen also asked about the diversity of the board and Ms. Stehr confirmed they do their best to get a diverse board but sometimes it is difficult; we have worked very hard to seek out diverse boards.

Chair Summers invited Assistant Chief, Michael Ake and Deputy Fire Chief John Pappuleas to the podium to introduce themselves. Captain Fred Scruggs also addressed the Board sharing insight on the hiring process for the Tacoma Police Department.

Board Member Sexton questioned Captain Scruggs about the alleged favoritism of candidates asking who investigated this and what happened. Captain Scruggs explained in detail the testing process, and how materials used in various trainings attended by officers may be used in the testing process. Chair Summers indicated it would be good for this Board to have information on what the philosophies are for both Police and Fire; stating some of what she is hearing, she would like to know more about. If we have an idea of what is expected of our officers; that would be helpful.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 PM

ATTEST:



Beckie Summers, Chair



Wendy Hobson  
Civil Service Board Coordinator