



Tacoma Civil Service Board  
Meeting Minutes

**Date and Time:** July 13, 2023, at 5:00 PM  
**Location:** TMB Room 243  
**Chair:** Eric Hansen  
**Coordinator:** Nga Nguyen

**Call to Order:**

Chair Hansen called the meeting to order at 5:00PM. All board members were present. Deputy City Attorney Martha Lantz was also present.

**Approval of June 1, 2023, minutes:**

Board Member Hansen motioned to approve; Board Member Wick seconded the motion.

Board Members Sexton and Heller abstained as they were not present on June 1, 2023.

**Chair Hansen:** Is Board Member Wick available?

**Board Member Wick:** I'll second.

VOICE VOTE: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, 2 ABS (HELLER, SEXTON). THE MINUTES OF JUNE 1, 2023, WERE APPROVED AS WRITTEN.

**Actions on Matters Still Pending / New Business:**

**Chair Hansen:** We do have the order of dismissal in the Matter of Eric Pizzollo. It has been signed by everyone but Board Member Wick. She will be given a copy to sign.

**Ms. Lantz:** When that is completed the coordinator will enter it into the record of the hearing and that will conclude the matter. A copy will be distributed to both of the parties.

**Board Member Sexton:** Stated that he was ill and could not follow along but read the minutes. He complimented the Board declaring that they did an outstanding job and the city not so much. He had a lot of questions on the matter. He hopes that going forward if the city states you are classified you should be classified. He was dismayed that the employee received a letter stating that he was a classified employee, and the city now says that was a typo and they don't know how many typos are out there. It could be many of them. He thinks that should be fixed and that going forward if someone appears before the Board with a letter stating they are a classified employee they should be treated as classified. It sounds like the city doesn't know how big of a problem this is but going forward if the City says someone is classified, they should be classified.

**Chair Hansen:** Board member Sexton, I went through the documents and spent quite a bit of time researching it as did Ms. Lantz. They had an executive session discussing it. They came to the decision that was warranted considering the law and the facts. On its face it seemed unfair, but we explored all the alternatives and there was not a legally defensible position that would support a decision that would favor the appellant. In the order, it does address the mixing of the term classified employee. The term was used in conjunction with the duties performed. Other times the term classified describes the rights of the positions. We asked Human Resources to look at their documents, especially the documents dealing with the offers of employment and communications to employees. Once you have a represented position you make decisions and rely on that representation. There is a doctrine that deals with this matter, but it is complicated and has many exceptions.

**Board Member Sexton:** What you are telling me is that your decision made sense. Although it may not seem like it to me who wasn't there, if I knew all the information that you know and the Board knows, you're saying it is the only decision you could have come to?

**Chair Hansen:** Exactly.

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked if his request would still make sense and that he believed the city still has a problem that needs to be fixed and asked if going forward...

**Chair Hansen:** (Cuts in) Asked if a copy of the order can be given to Board Member Sexton. (He is given one)

**Ms. Lantz:** Points out finding number three.

**Board Member Sexton:** Reads the finding aloud: This finding instructed the city to review all item related templates and correspondence for clarity and accuracy and to make all necessary updates and corrections to avoid future instances of inaccuracies as occurred in the correspondence to Mr. Pizzollo and to report back to the Board at a future date with the results of such review. What happens if someone else falls through the cracks between now and then?

**Chair Hansen:** Replied that it would be on a case-by-case basis.

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked that the order be passed to Board Member Heller as she would also not have gotten a copy.

There was a discussion on who got a copy and who would get a signed copy later.

**Board Member Klein:** Stated that although it was not in the minutes, he was at the previous meeting and the Chair very sternly and professionally admonished the staff and imagines they got the message well and that the two other Board Members seconded what he said.

**Chair Hansen:** Asked if there any other comments about the order. The next item is on residency. The last time it was discussed, Board Member Wick came up with the idea that there were some positions that we could have a blanket waiver for as they historically have a low pool of applicants. He turned to Ms. Fritz and said that from her experience, she knows which positions have low applicant pools. He indicated that she drafted a list of positions to consider for a blanket waiver.

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked if there was a reason that the list was not sent out to board members and if the list was just finished now.

**Director Fritz:** Affirms that the list was just finished.

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked if the Board was being asked to take action on a list that they were seeing for the first time just now.

**Chair Hansen:** Clarifies that action is not being asked of the Board on the list that was just created.

**Director Fritz:** Informed the Board that there were a lot of people for the actions. She asked if the Board would like to do that first.

**Board Member Sexton:** Stated he would like to do that instead.

**Chair Hansen:** Agreed and asked to move onto the Human Resources Director Report.

**Human Resources Director Report and Requests:**

**Director Fritz:** The first request is for an extension of a temporary appointment. It is for Natalie Sanders who works for the Human Resources Department as a Human Resources Assistant. Jessica Madrigal is present for the request. Natalie is also present, and Director Fritz said she would answer any questions related to it.

**Jessica Madrigal:** Introduces herself as an HR Analyst for the City. An employee for five plus years Jessica supports the HR department and multiple other departments. She is here to request an extension of Natalie Sanders, pursuant to TMC code 1.24.710 until March 12, 2024. Natalie was initially hired to help the HR Admin team transfer paper files to electronic files. She has done an amazing job. Jessica further explained that the HR Admin team will have two employees leaving on extended absences and she would help fill in those gaps.

**Chair Hansen:** Asked for the end date of the extension.

**Jessica Madrigal:** Repeated March 12,2024

**Board Member Sexton:** Expressed his concerns over the misuse of temporary employees and how they would come to the Board after the fact. He stated that he looks closely at the date of the request as they would come in after the six months.

**Director Fritz:** Stated that should not happen as the employee would have already been separated. She let the Board know that it hasn't happened since she has been Director.

**Board Member Sexton:** Conceded that it seems the office is being run more efficiently than when he started.

**Jessica Madrigal:** Shared that the request is being done early. Natalie's end date is in September.

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked if or when an offer of permanent employment is coming.

**Director Fritz:** Provided some background on the employee. Natalie was hired as a temporary employee from the Human Resources Assistant list to support a project which was converting all the personnel files to electronic. She was the key person in making sure that they got scanned. The project has ended but they love Natalie and can't let her go, plus a member of the staff is expecting....

**Board Member Sexton: (interjects)** You can't let her go but you are keeping her as a temporary employee?

**Director Fritz:** Until I can get budget to have another HR Assistant position.

**Board Member Sexton:** Questioned whether that will happen between now and September.

**Director Fritz:** Informed him that a budget mid-modification process is coming up, and that a position cannot be guaranteed but that a member of the HR Admin staff has been temporarily promoted for a learning opportunity that is currently an HR Assistant.

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked what a temporary promotion is and if it must be given back in six months.

**Director Fritz:** Explained that it won't be necessarily six months but a period of time and that the department has expecting mothers so it would give the HRA a great opportunity to explore the HR Specialist role and there is also another HR Assistant that is expecting. Therefore, Natalie Sanders could provide that coverage.

**Board Member Heller:** Asked about the file conversion project and learned that it was all the personnel files and Benefits.

**Director Fritz:** Explained that the three HR Assistants and a Department Aide all handle that and a variety of other things. Natalie also assists with that process.

**Board Member Sexton:** Moved to grant the extension for temporary employee Natalie Sanders

**Board Member Klein:** Second.

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

**Director Fritz:** She's prepared.

**Natalie Sanders:** My name is Natalie Sanders. I have been with the City since September and during that time, I have had the privilege of amassing invaluable experience within the realm of Human Resources. By diligently acquainting myself with nearly all the responsibilities associated with the role of an HR Assistant. I consistently strive to expand my knowledge and expertise on a daily basis. I am truly blessed to be surrounded by a cohesive and supportive team, who are willing to share their wisdom and actively engage in collaborative endeavors as they arise. I wholeheartedly appreciate the opportunity I have been granted, and I am eager to prolong my employment with the city for the requested extension period. Furthermore, should a permanent position within the organization materialize, I am motivated to pursue it.

A general discussion followed on why the meeting was in this particular room and not in the chambers. The Board wanted to discuss the location at the next meeting. It was determined that there was a hearing scheduled in chambers so that is why the meeting was held in a smaller room. Board Member Sexton let the others know that he was in touch with Wendy Hobson. He stated that even though Wendy was dealing with other family matters she had diligently worked to procure another room but to no avail.

**Director Fritz:** Introduced the next request for an extension for Ashley Jones, a Skilled Occupational Intern.

**Board Member Sexton:** Pointed out that this request was added on the agenda and that the Board did not get a copy. He said that he would have to object to everything.

**Director Fritz:** Responded "Please no".

**Board Member Sexton:** Replied "No? Well then tell us how deserving she is."

**Marie Angel:** Introduced herself as a Human Resources Analyst for several departments. She introduced Brennan Kidd, Division Manager Public Works.

**Brennan Kidd:** Introduced himself and thanked the Board for their flexibility. He said that he didn't understand that an extension would be needed for Ashley because she wasn't going to exceed the 2,080 hours of a temporary employee. He gave a background on Ashley including her BA degree in Liberal Arts and that she is currently pursuing a master's degree. She also recently received the City of Destiny Award for Equity. Ashley works in the Transportation Department and among other things led the City's bike month. Her position is grant funded. Currently, she is summer active outreach which includes the Hilltop Street Fair which will be in August, after her position would end. He further explained that because her position is grant funded, ending her employment at this time would make it extremely difficult for the current staff to meet the grant deliverables.

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked how a Skilled Occupational Intern is different in terms of time frames and if they are for a year and then for six months. Mr. Kidd nodded, and Board Member Sexton said aloud that he is taking the nodding for agreement.

**Board Member Heller:** Asked when the grant ended.

**Brennan Kidd:** Indicated he did not know but that they did have the funds for the extension.

**Board Member Heller:** Asked why it was a temporary based position as opposed to a project.

**Brennan Kidd:** He responded that he was not part of position form and the strategy so he could not answer.

**Board Member Klein:** Stated Ashley was very accomplished, and her family must have had a part in that. He said he follows the schools in Tacoma and wondered which school deserves credit for her.

**Ashley Jones:** Stated she did all the work. When asked another way she answered Foss High.

**Board Member Heller:** Asked her what year she graduated.

**Ashley Jones:** 2006

**Board Member Heller:** Questioned Director Fritz as to why the position was a temporary position and not a project.

**Director Fritz:** Responded that she too was not part of the inception of the position nor took part in the strategy meeting. Her educated guess was that because the employee was a student, an internship was appropriate.

**Board Member Heller:** Admitted she did not catch that she was a student and thought she had already graduated.

**Board Member Sexton:** Moved to grant the request for the extension of Ashley Jones.

**Board Member Heller:** Seconded the motion.

**A VOICE VOTE WAS TAKEN: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS, 0 ABS. THE MOTION PASSED**

**Director Fritz:** Begins the last request for a Waiver of Competitive Examination for Michael Davis and introduced Cheryl Bidleman.

**Cheryl Bidleman:** Introduced herself as an Assistant HR Director and spoke about the apprenticeship program which includes 7,000 hours of on-the-job training and 400 hours of classroom work done on their own time after work for approximately three and a half

years. She then introduced Sheryl Brown from Tacoma Power to speak on behalf of Michael Davis.

**Sheryl Brown:** Introduces herself as a Training and Apprenticeship Supervisor. She let the Board know that she started out as a temporary HR Assistant and has been with the city for 16 years, so it does work out and getting permanent employment as a temporary is possible. She provided background on Michael. He started out as a Meter Reader Field Investigator and wanted to join the apprenticeship program. He applied several times and after each time sought feedback and applied that feedback until he successfully entered the program. She shared that the day she called him in to let him know he did make it into the program was one of her favorite days because he was so grateful for the opportunity. Shortly after, Michael was in a horrible motorcycle accident and that his supervisor, who has created a family environment, ensured that he never went a day without pay. She said that he has perseverance, grit and is humble. She started to cry and said that she practiced not to cry.

**Michael Davis:** Chair Hansen, I am not formal, I apologize. I wasn't expecting that, thank you Sheryl. I had a very up and down upbringing in life and the city has helped me grow so much. It not only changed me, but also the parenting and family life. It changed me as a man. It is a competitive position and like Sheryl said, I had some setbacks. The people around me have strong school or military background and they took a chance on me. So far it has been great and so many people around me have a ton of information and are patient with me and helping me grow. There is so much I want to say but I am except that I am really getting emotional. I just really want to thank my boss. Not only did I get into my motorcycle accident early on, but my wife was also diagnosed with stage four cancer and my son was driving back from college and flipped his car and was air lifted to Harborview hospital. People wonder why I walk around with a smile. It is amazing how many people have pulled together for me, who don't really know me. They just said that I was positive in passing. It has impacted me and made me want to give back to Tacoma and the community. I am just very grateful.

**Board Member Sexton:** Thanked Mr. Davis for being there and for his story and service. He stated that he also completed an apprenticeship program and has always thought that we should make these automatic. He said the Board would have approved him without him being there.

**Board Member Klein:** He had a 30 year plus association with Tacoma Power and he as soon as he saw meter relay shop, he immediately reflected on his experience and said that they are the smartest people in the utility organization.

**Board Member Heller:** She told him that she did not go the trades route but went to college. She stated that she has friends and family that went the trades route, but it is as difficult and as great an achievement as any college degree. She said you made not have walked, but we see you.

**Michael Davis:** Thank you. I am a Foss grad too.

**Board Member Heller:** What year?

**Michael Davis:** 1996

**Board Member Sexton:** Moved to grant the City's request to waive the competitive examination for Michael Davis, Meter and Relay Technician

**Board Member Heller:** Seconds the Motion

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

**Chair Hansen:** Matters set for public hearing?

**Nga Nguyen:** None this evening

**Chair Hansen:** Civil Service Coordinator report?

**Nga Nguyen:** None this evening

**Chair Hansen:** So, we are on residency

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked about the whistleblowers compliant about police hiring and an email that either wasn't sent or that he couldn't find.

**Chair Hansen:** Thought Director Fritz might have something on that.

**Director Fritz:** She had nothing new. She emailed the compliant to the board as it was addressed to them and others. It is currently being investigated and she has not had an update into the investigation but when she does get one, she will share that with the board. She also resent the document to Board Member Sexton.

**Board Member Heller:** Asked when the investigation is complete would the board be getting a copy.

**Director Fritz:** Said she will check on that.

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked if it was one person or multiple people.

**Director Fritz:** Her recollection was that it was one person complaining about one incident that may or may not have happened

**Board Member Heller:** Stated that was also her recollection.

**Chair Hansen:** Went back to residency and how a list was being compiled on positions with historically low candidate pools. He asked how many pages the list is.

**Board Member Sexton:** Asked if there was going to be a study session.



**Chair Hansen:** The Board could go over the lists and then go home and then vote on it. He said that they want to get it right.

**Director Fritz:** Informed the Board that **we are** working with our union partners and that Byron Allen has asked that the Board not vote until they could go over the list.

**Cheryl Bidleman:** Referenced TMC 1.24.450 which has two waiver exceptions 1. Where the nature of the employment requires residence outside of the city, and 2. When it otherwise serves the best interests of the city. She goes over the first which is easy to understand, and she asked for that waiver to continue. She then asked for a second based on use of EEO categories. The EEO categories in classified that blanket waivers are being requested for include the following: Professionals, Technical Operations, Paraprofessionals and Skilled Craft Workers. She went over each category and the number of jobs each category includes and the overview of the job categories and the titles. The positions that didn't have the waiver would go before the Board for special requests.

**Board Member Heller:** Asked if the residency preference point is no longer an option.

**Director Fritz:** Explains the preference would work like military preference points work. She then she explains how military points work.

**Jessica Madrigal:** Explained how ranks work and how there can be multiple people in each rank. She gave an example stating if a Tacoma resident scores a 69.9 percent and the passing score is 70, with the Tacoma preference points added, that resident would make the list.

**Board Member Sexton:** Does not believe that the blanket waiver would work. He thinks work force of the city is 80% white but the population of residents in Tacoma is not.

**Board Member Heller:** Recruiting problems are everywhere. Her current employer and former employer did not have a residency requirement and they are having staffing issues.

**Director Fritz:** Promised to have the data requested for the study session and thinks that hearing from Bryon Allen would be beneficial. She also states that equity checkpoints are being implemented and are helping to remove barriers.

**Board Member Sexton:** Believes that the minimum qualifications are too high

**Board Member Heller:** Talked about how many high school graduates with a significant number of minority members there are every year in the City of Tacoma and how they would qualify for most entry level positions and asked questions about those positions.

**Board Member Sexton:** The blanket waiver is not working. I do think the workforce of the City is 80% white. The population of the City is 40% non-white.

**Director Fritz:** The part she has is the union input and that she will see if Byron will want to come to the next meeting.

**Chair Hansen:** He wants to put a vote on the agenda.

**Director Fritz:** Asked when Board Member Heller will be retiring.


**Board Member Heller:** End of December.

**Board Member Sexton:** Move to adjourn

**Board Member Klein:** Second

**Meeting adjourned: 7:05 PM**

**ATTEST:**

  
Eric Hansen, Chair  
Wendy Hobson, Coordinator