

Meeting of the Civil Service Board

Present: Vice-Chair Steve Sanderfer, George L. Allen, Jr., F. Ray Hill, Marvin M. Lane, Jr., Alicia Voltmer

Absent: Pat Parrish, Joseph L. Phifer

Attendees:

Louie Bright, Assistant Chief - Dallas Fire-Rescue
Debra Carlin, Assistant Chief/ Fire Marshall - Dallas Fire-Rescue
Scott Clumpner, Grievance Chair - Dallas Fire Fighters Association
Dwight Freeman, Sr. Fire Prevention Officer – Dallas Fire-Rescue
Christopher Head, City Employee
Jason McClain, Assistant City Attorney
Janice Moss, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Scott Newland - United Steelworkers Union
Kevin F. Sipes, Deputy Chief - Fire Prevention, Education and Inspection

Civil Service Department Staff:

Michelle Hanchard, Assistant Director
Sheneice Hughes, Test Development and Validation Coordinator
Patricia Marsolais, Secretary to the Civil Service Board
Kimberly Martin, Sr. Human Resources Analyst
Pamela McDonald, Manager – Examining and Recruitment Division
Dawne Payne, Sr. Human Resources Analyst
Martha Santos, Executive Assistant
Joanne Ung, Project Manager NEOGOV

The meeting was called to order at 8:32 a.m.

The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the Thursday, December 6, 2007 regular meeting.

In accordance with Chapter XVI, Section 2 of the Dallas City Charter, Board member Lane stated that it was the responsibility of the Board to elect a Vice-Chair. Mr. Lane nominated Steve Sanderfer. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Allen. The Board voted unanimously to re-elect Steve Sanderfer as its Vice-Chair.

The Board entered into executive session from 8:37 a.m. to 8:43 a.m. receive legal advice from the City Attorney on the proposed rule amendments to Civil Service Rule XIV PROMOTIONS, Fire-Rescue Department, Sections 4(B)(1)(f) and 4(B)(1)(h). There was no action taken during the closed session.

The Secretary read the prospective rule amendments into the record after which the Vice-Chair opened the public hearing to receive comments on the changes. Senior Fire Prevention Officer (SFPO) Dwight Freeman gave the Board a detailed explanation of an SFPO's duties and why he does not believe the rules should be changed midstream.

Assistant Chief Louie Bright addressed SFPO Freeman's concerns by clarifying that the proposed rule changes resolve the issues about time in rank after transferring before being eligible to promote. He added that the Chief's decision was to draw the line at some point where future employees would have to serve a minimum amount of time in those positions.

There being no more public comments, the Vice-Chair closed the public hearing. The Board voted unanimously to adopt the proposed rule amendments.

The Board discussed the status of the responses to the Board's questions submitted through Senior Assistant City Attorney Janice Moss to the various parties named in the investigation. The Secretary said she had not received any responses. Ms. Moss said she hadn't gotten any either.

The Vice-Chair inquired about the status of the Board's request for independent counsel. Several requests had been made to the City Attorney some time ago. Ms. Moss said they have considerable things on their plate now but a response should be forthcoming. They have been working on it.

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Board member Lane indicated that the City Manager advised him that she couldn't respond until a second conference call with the vendor NEOGOV took place the next week. He hopes that after that a target date can be set for the responses. Senior Assistant City Attorney Janice Moss will relay that information to the City Manager.

In discussion about other issues in the investigation the Secretary advised the Board that she had received an e-mail from NEOGOV Manager Joanne Ung that the requisition form had been changed without notification to Civil Service. Ms. Ung explained the situation and how the change had been discovered. Ms. Ung discovered that nine new fields had been added to the form requiring departments to fill them out before the requisition could go through. This change impacted departments that were trying to fill multiple positions. In Ms. Ung's opinion the additional information being called for is irrelevant to the requisition process. And by requiring the departments to put something in those fields it had stopped the departments from being able to process their requisitions. Action was taken to unrequire these fields so departments could continue with their work.

Ms. Ung said that the requisition was designed and developed by Civil Service because that's where requisitions are sent. Any changes to the document should have been requested through Civil Service.

The Vice-Chair asked Ms. Ung if it is possible to develop a change control system in which all interested parties would have an opportunity to review this type of change, discuss it, and ultimately sign off if there is agreement. The Secretary outlined a process Assistant City Manager Jill Jordan had requested the Communication/Information Services (CIS) Department put together to accomplish this at a recent staff accountability meeting. The Vice-Chair asked the Secretary to obtain a date from Jill Jordan when something would be in place so this doesn't ever happen again like it's happened every month since October.

Board member Hill questioned whether something else is going on that the Board is not seeing yet the functions the Board oversees are being impacted.

Board member Lane emphasized that the Dallas City Charter says the Civil Service Board is to adopt rules and regulations, amend and enforce a code of those rules and regulations providing for the employment of all positions in the classified service which have the force and effect of law. Thus, when the requisition system is changed it prevents Civil Service from doing its job and that in his non legal opinion is a violation of the City Charter.

The Vice-Chair added that it's either intentional or unintentional ignorance of the Charter. Mr. Sanderfer said he would like to believe that it's just ignorance of the rules. The Board is doing what it's doing to address the situation and educate the parties.

As far as setting up a change control system, Senior Assistant City Attorney Moss said that with all due respect to Ms. Ung and all the fine work she's done, she doesn't know all the things Ms. Moss knows in terms of how long it's going to take to implement this.

The Vice-Chair suggested the City Attorney's Office cut the red tape, get people involved and achieve a set up where it has to be in order to avoid repeat problems.

Ms. Ung stated that it was Raymond Lee in Human Resources who made the changes to the requisition. Human Resources Director David Etheridge confirmed that. The Vice-Chair reiterated that the current state of the system is a recipe for disaster. He emphasized to all to fix the problem and cut out the red tape.

Assistant Director Michelle Hanchard gave the Board an update on uniform testing and indicated that the coming months are busy ones.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:26 a.m.

(A complete transcription of this meeting is available)

ATTESTED

APPROVED