

Regular Meeting of the Civil Service Board

Present: George L. Allen, Jr., (Acting Vice-Chair), F. Ray Hill, Pat Parrish, Joseph L. Phifer, Alicia Voltmer

Absent: Steve Sanderfer Vice-Chair, Marvin M. Lane, Jr.

Attendees:

Amy Allen, Assistant City Attorney
Dodd Allen, Rehire Applicant
Louie Bright, Executive Assistant Chief, Dallas Fire-Rescue
Debra Carlin, Assistant Chief, Dallas Fire-Rescue
David Etheridge, Human Resources Director
Jill Jordan, Assistant City Manager
Jerry Lawrence, Former Civil Service Board Member
Raymond Lee, Human Resources Department
Jason McClain, Assistant City Attorney
Janice Moss, Senior Assistant City Attorney
Richard Santiestaban, Latino Police Officers Association
Thomas Tanksley – Assistant Chief, Dallas Fire-Rescue
Joseph Vasquez, Assistant Chief, Dallas Fire-Rescue
Michael Walton, Dallas Fraternal Order of Police

Civil Service Department Staff:

Michelle Hanchard, Assistant Director
Sheneice Hughes, Test Development and Validation Division Coordinator
Patricia Marsolais, Secretary to the Civil Service Board
Pamela McDonald, Sr. Human Resources Analyst
Kimberly Martin, Sr. Human Resources Analyst
Savina Rikhilal, Coordinator II
Martha Santos, Interim Executive Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. by George L. Allen Jr. In the absence of Vice-Chair Sanderfer due to military duty, former Board Chair Allen conducted the meeting.

The minutes of the Thursday, June 7, 2007 meeting were unanimously approved.

The Board heard the rehire appeal of former Aviation Department employee Dodd Allen. After much discussion with Mr. Allen about his previous employment with the City and consideration of material provided for the Board's review, the Board voted three to two to allow Mr. Allen to reapply for City employment. **Voting Aye:** Parrish, Phifer, Voltmer **Voting Nay:** Allen, Hill.

Assistant City Manager Jill Jordan was on hand to answer questions from the Board about the transfer of background checks from the Civil Service to the Human Resources Department as well as the steps being taken to revise the criminal convictions matrix.

Prior to beginning the discussion, Board member Pat Parrish stated that the information in the briefing prepared by Ms. Jordan addresses the processes after the fact and not the review, analysis and dialogue that went into the decision-making on these issues. Mrs. Parrish added that the Board was completely ignored in the process despite its development of the convictions matrix in the 1990s and conduct of background checks for City departments by Civil Service Department staff. After talking with some City Council Members Mrs. Parrish had the impression that moving the background checks out of the Civil Service Department through a consent agenda Council item was not fully understood. Mrs. Parrish explained her concern that the resolution removes the checks and balances in place to maintain the integrity of the merit system by assigning sole responsibility for it to the Human Resources Director. Mr. Allen said that Mrs. Parrish's comments certainly reflect the feeling of the Board.

Ms. Jordan described the work of a business process management team that originated out of Strategic Customer Services' recognition that the employee on-boarding process needed improvement. With the transition to the on-line NEOGOV workforce management system she explained that a change in the background check process would achieve efficiencies. She also discussed the Ex-Offenders Program and the work done by the City Manager's Office, City Attorney's Office, and Human Resources Department to look at the convictions matrices and how they would impact the objectives of the program. She said the decision about the background checks was an internal decision on how to handle things. The Human Resources Department has hired a vendor to do this work. Mrs. Parrish expressed her concern that the Civil Service Board had been excluded from these conversations. The criminal convictions matrix was developed by the Board in 1997. In addition, she added her disappointment about the City Manager's and City Attorney's Offices talking with the EEOC about Civil Service employees without mentioning it to the Board.

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Senior Assistant City Attorney Janice Moss said that the City Attorney's Office had not talked to the EEOC and that outside counsel has been hired to review the existing matrices and make recommendations. She said once they have a suggestion the Board will be advised.

Board member Alicia Voltmer expressed her appreciation for the information that had been provided but added that the question of how everything evolved to the point of making recommendations without the Board's involvement had not been answered.

Mrs. Parrish reiterated that a City Council member she spoke with was unaware of the impact of the resolution. She stressed that it is not a matter of coming to the Board first but utilizing lines of communication to keep the Board informed.

The Secretary to the Board explained what had transpired to her knowledge about the transfer of background checks from Civil Service to the Human Resources Department. It wasn't until she was handed a copy of the May 23, 2007 resolution a few days before the City Council meeting that she learned that a decision had been made to do this. She had been previously assured by a Senior Manager in the Human Resources Department that this was not the case. Board member Allen asked Ms. Jordan if the matter was set in stone. Based on the fact that it had gone to Council, Ms. Parrish said she would ask for it to be reconsidered. Mr. Allen advised that all members speak to their Council persons. Ms. Jordan indicated it was her understanding that the funding would remain for the Civil Service employee who had been conducting background checks. She did not confirm that the Human Resources Department had submitted a bid through the "Price of Government" budget process to acquire this service. She said that Human Resources will have the money to do it. Mr. Allen suggested the Board send a letter to the Mayor and City Council apprising them of its concerns.

The Secretary gave the Board an update on the proposed fiscal year 07/08 budget. Funding for the department's six service areas had been moved forward to the City Council for consideration. The Board thanked staff for their efforts on the budget.

Assistant Director Michelle Hanchard updated the Board on Police and Fire testing projects. Since her last report the department has developed and administered the written examinations for entry-level Fire-Rescue Officer and the Fire Prevention ranks of Captain, Lieutenant, and Section Chief. The assessment centers for the three Fire Prevention ranks were administered in July. The next examination cycle will focus on the Police promotional ranks.

Ms. Hanchard also gave the Board a status report on the Board recommended initiatives and projects regarding the assessment center process. The City Attorney's Office is reviewing the promotional process booklet developed by Civil Service staff. Senior Assistant City Attorney Janice Moss said they are revising it but couldn't promise a completion date.

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

APPROVED

ATTESTED