

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF  
THE BOARD OF FIRE AND POLICE COMMISSIONERS OF  
THE CITY OF NORTH CHICAGO**

February 4, 2016

Held at the City of North Chicago Police Annex,  
1801 Sheridan Road, North Chicago, Illinois

1. Chairwoman Dicker called the meeting to order at 9:01 A.M.
2. Roll call identified the following Commissioners present:  
    Chairwoman Velma Dicker  
    Commissioner Vanderbilt Blanchard

Commissioners absent:  
    Secretary Shawna Huley

Other persons present included:

Attorney Joseph Miller of the law firm of Ottosen-Britz, Ltd.  
Attorney Brian O'Connor of the law firm of Ottosen-Britz, Ltd.  
Dell Urban, Chief, North Chicago Fire Department  
Valiza Nash, North Chicago Police Department & Police Pension Fund  
Kenneth Robinson, Treasurer, City of North Chicago  
Donald Craft  
Tony Theis, Lieutenant, North Chicago Police Department  
Richard Wilson, Deputy Chief, North Chicago Police Department  
Todd Smith, Candidate for Police Officer Appointment  
Luis Rivera, Officer, North Chicago Police Department  
Demetrius Terrell, Candidate for Police Officer Appointment  
Carl Evans, Third Ward Alderman, City of North Chicago  
Torrance D. Markham, Jr., Fifth Ward Alderman, City of North Chicago  
Steven Roberts, Officer, North Chicago Police Department and F.O.P. Lodge  
Carl Sturt, Officer, North Chicago Police Department and F.O.P. Lodge  
Frank Abderholden, Reporter, Lake County News Sun (arrived late)

Chairwoman Dicker requested Attorney Miller assist facilitating the meeting as she had a cold and was concerned she would be unable to speak with sufficient volume so all could hear. No objection by Commissioner Blanchard or Attorney Miller.

3. Discussion/action on election of Secretary for the Commissioners.
  - a. Attorney Miller announced for all that Commissioner Huley had resigned as Secretary at the end of the regular meeting January 7, 2016.
  - b. Chairwoman Dicker made a motion to elect Commissioner Blanchard as Secretary, seconded by Commissioner Blanchard. No further discussion. Roll call vote: 2 Yes (Dicker, Blanchard), 0 No, 1 Absent (Huley). Commissioner Blanchard elected as Secretary for the Commissioners.
4. Chairwoman Dicker opened the meeting for Public Comment.

9:05 A.M. Commissioner Huley arrives at the meeting while Public Comment by Treasurer Robinson was underway.

- a. Treasurer Robinson.
  - i. Treasurer Robinson asked about the hiring process for original appointment of police officers, and more specifically which candidates had been approved and certified for appointment by the Commissioners.
  - ii. Attorney Miller explained that 2 candidates from the list that expired October 1, 2015, had previously been approved and certified for appointment by the Commissioners.
  - iii. Attorney Miller explained that none of the candidates on the current list had yet completed the process for certification for appointment.
    - 1. The Commissioners had determined that Candidates #7 (Muhammed Alka) and #8 (Patrick Fajardo, Jr.) had successfully passed the Background Check and should be proceeding with the final pre-employment (medical, psychological, polygraph) checks.
  - iv. The Commissioners were advised that the City had appointed 2 new police officers at the meeting on Monday, February 1, 2016. After some lengthy discussion, it was determined that these 2 appointees were in fact that 2 candidates from the old list approved and certified by the Commissioners in 2015 and not any candidates from the current list, contrary to the understanding and concerns of some members of the public present at the meeting.
  - v. Attorney Miller again provided an overview of the police officer original appointment process, generally consisting of steps after the testing process resulting in the Final Eligibility Register has been completed including (1) background checks, which if determined by the Commissioners to have been successfully passed leads to (2) a conditional offer of employment by the City (likely HR) enabling completion of final qualification checks (medical, psychological and polygraph), which if determined by the Commissioners to have been successfully passed leads to (3) a certification of eligibility for appointment as a full-time police officer with the City.
  - vi. Treasurer Robinson said he would follow-up and share the process with other City officials, notably Human Resources.
- b. Officer Roberts.
  - i. Offered comments as a spokesperson for the F.O.P. Lodge.
  - ii. General discussion of the [police sergeant] promotional process ensued between Officer Roberts and Attorney Miller. Clarification that notice of the written test had been published in the newspaper, as required by law and the Commissioners' rules. The written examination for the police sergeant exam is scheduled for April 19, 2016.
  - iii. Officer Roberts indicated he would post a copy of the published notice.
- c. Officer Nash.
  - i. Offered comments as a spokesperson for the Police Pension Fund.
  - ii. Inquired about City appointments or 2 police officers made February 1, 2016.
  - iii. After some discussion [noted in item 4(a)(iv) above] Officer Nash understood prior Commissioners certification and approval for appointment of those 2 candidates.

- iv. Officer Nash asked that the Police Pension Fund Board receive a copy of the Commissioners written certification and approval for appointment for police officer candidates to be appointed.
  - v. The Commissioners were amendable to Officer Nash's request for written notification of certification and approval for appointment to the Police Pension Fund, much as the Commissioners would provide written notification of certification and approval for appointment to the Firefighters' Pension Fund.
- d. Candidate Terrell.
- i. Inquired about the status of the police officer original appointment list.
  - ii. Was present for the updates noted in item 4(a) above.
  - iii. Was asked to remain so the Commissioners could confer with Candidate Terrell in closed session.
- e. Alderman Evans.
- i. Alderman Evans asked about the candidate list for original appointment of police officers, expressing concern that candidates not approved and certified for appointment by the Commissioners had been sworn-in as police officers.
  - ii. Discussion clarified the prior (or old) list expired October 1, 2015. 2 candidates from that old list were approved and certified for appointment by the Commissioners prior to lapse of that old list. Various persons present (including at least Deputy Chief Wilson, Lt. Theis and Officer Nash) confirmed that those 2 candidates were the individuals sworn-in on Monday, February 1, 2016.
  - iii. This helped allay the Alderman's concerns, but he asked for an update on candidates from the current list.
  - iv. Attorneys Miller and O'Connor noted that the Commissioners had approved the current candidate list (Final Eligibility Register) in late September 2015, prior to the lapse of the old list. The new list became effective October 1, 2015 and was to remain valid until October 2, 2017.
  - v. Attorneys Miller and O'Connor explained that the Commissioners are working with candidates for original appointment for police officer from that new list, with the following current status.
    - 1. Candidates #7 (Muhammed Alka) and #8 (Patrick Fajardo, Jr.) had successfully passed the Background Check and should be proceeding with the final pre-employment (medical, psychological, polygraph) checks.
    - 2. The Commissioners were still evaluating the Background Check results of Candidate #2 (Todd Smith).
    - 3. 7 candidates did not successfully pass the Background Check: #1 (Uracan Astudillo), #3 (Anthony Wells), #4 (Rosa Vargas), #5 (Oscar Juarez), #8 (Tai-Amber Nixon-White), #9 (Demetrius Terrell) and #10 (Gary Sanders).
    - 4. 5 additional candidates had been authorized to proceed with Background Checks: #11 (Purvish Patel), #12 (Patrick Scanlan), #13 (Joseph Semple), #14 (Christopher Aylesworth) and #15 (Kevin Hartman).

- vi. Alderman Evans confirmed his understanding with the Commissioners and Attorney Miller that only the Commissioners had the authority to certify for appointment full-time police officers.
  - vii. Attorney Miller reiterated the importance that the Commissioners receive timely updates on candidates including results of Background Checks and the other (medical, psychological, polygraph) follow-on checks, reminding all present that it was the Commissioners duty and obligation to evaluate each of these checks prior to issuing its determination on whether a candidate was eligible for appointment.
- f. Alderman Markham, Jr.
- i. Reconfirmed that 2 police officers sworn-in on Monday, February 1, 2016, were from the old list and had been approved and certified for appointment by the Commissioners in 2015, and these 2 officers were not from the current list.
  - ii. In response to the Alderman's question, Deputy Chief Wilson confirmed that Candidates #7 (Muhammed Alka) and #8 (Patrick Fajardo, Jr.), who had successfully passed the Background Check and were in the process of completing the final pre-employment (medical, psychological, polygraph) checks, were currently enrolled in the police training academy. Deputy Chief Wilson explained because of the limited police training academy sessions, these candidates were scheduled for the training prior to being certified by the Commissioners. Deputy Chief Wilson explained the Department anticipated no problems with certification of either candidate but understood that was the Commissioners determination and should either not be certified then the benefit of the police training academy would be lost.
  - iii. Alderman Markham expressed some concern that candidates not certified for appointment were being sent to training.
  - iv. Alderman Markham said he would follow-up and share these concerns with other City officials.
- g. Officer Sturt.
- i. Inquired about with limited discussion relating to the process for Background Checks for police officer candidates.
- h. Officer Rivera.
- i. Provided an overview, but omitting specific candidate details, of the Background Checks for police officer candidates.
- i. Fire Chief Urban addressed the Commissioners.
- i. Chief Urban explained the urgency in the hiring process in this instance as replacement was mandated by the Federal SAFER Grant.
  - ii. Chief Urban expressed her thanks to Officer Rivera for his efforts to expedite Background Checks for firefighter candidates.
5. Approval of minutes.
- a. The minutes from the October 22, 2015 were reviewed. Chairwoman Dicker made the motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Secretary Blanchard. No further discussion. Roll call vote: 3 Yes, 0 No. Motion and minutes approved.

- b. The minutes from open session of the January 7, 2016 Board of Fire and Police Commissioners were reviewed. Chairwoman Dicker made the motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Secretary Blanchard. No further discussion. Roll call vote: 3 Yes, 0 No. Motion and minutes approved.
- c. The minutes from closed session of the January 7, 2016 Board of Fire and Police Commissioners were reviewed. Chairwoman Dicker made the motion to approve the minutes as presented and retain them as confidential, seconded by Commissioner Huley. No further discussion. Roll call vote: 3 Yes, 0 No. Motion and minutes approved.

6. Old Business.

- a. Discussion/possible action on invoices for Commission services.
  - i. Chairwoman Dicker presented the invoice in the amount of \$375.00 from the Illinois Fire and Police Commissioner Association (IFPCA) for annual membership fees.
  - ii. Attorney Miller explained IFPCA membership was helpful for Commissioners. Attorney Miller explained the IFPCS assists with the education and development of fire and police commissioners and to promote a high level of training and ethical standards of excellence in commission leadership and innovation.
  - iii. Secretary Blanchard made a motion to approve payment of \$375.00 for annual renewal of IFPCA membership, seconded by Chairwoman Dicker. No further discussion. Roll call vote: 3 Yes, 0 No. Invoice approved for payment.

7. New Business.

- a. Discussion/possible action on appointment of full-time firefighters. Addressed during public comment. Tabled until after Closed Session deliberation of candidate pre-employment check results.
- b. Discussion/possible action on appointment of full-time police officers. Addressed during public comment, with additional discussion to follow in closed session. Tabled until after Closed Session deliberation of candidate pre-employment check results.
- c. Discussion/action regarding promotional examination for the rank of sergeant for the North Chicago Police Department. Discussed earlier [item 4(b)(ii)]. The written test is scheduled for Tuesday, April 19, 2016. Notice of the exam was published. Scheduling allowed for the full 90-day study period. Chairwoman Dicker requested the number of eligible exam candidates explaining that she was concerned about the sufficiency of the training room to adequately accommodate the candidates.
- d. Discussion/action regarding promotional examination for the rank of lieutenant for the North Chicago Fire Department. Chief Urban stated notice of the promotion has already been posted. The written test is scheduled for May 23, 2016.

- e. Discussion/possible action on process for appointment of full-time firefighters. Tabled until after Closed Session.
8. Closed Session. Chairwoman Dicker requested closed session for a discussion concerning the appointment, employment of specific persons for the City of North Chicago. Motion by Chairwoman Dicker, second by Secretary Blanchard, to enter closed session at 10:01 A.M. to discuss the appointment, employment of specific persons for the City of North Chicago per Section 2(c)(1) of the Open Meetings Act. There being no discussion, a roll call vote: 3 Yes, 0 No. Motion to enter closed session carried.

Members of the public left the meeting.

9. Chairwoman Dicker recalled open session to order at 12:18 P.M.
10. Action on items from closed session
- a. Motion by Chairwoman Dicker, seconded by Secretary Blanchard regarding the appointment of full-time firefighters as follows:
    - i. That Candidates #4 (Wollert) and #8 (Dykiel) failed their Background Checks and participation in the process should end,
    - ii. That Candidate #5 (Rich) passed his Background Check but the Commissioners determined other candidates on the list would better serve the needs of the Department so Candidate #5 would remain on the list but be passed over, and
    - iii. That Candidates #6 (White) and #7 (Sundquist) had passed their Background Checks and were authorized to proceed with final pre-employment (medical) checks.In so moving, the Commissioners were advised that the Background Check on Candidate #9 was pending. There being no further discussion, a roll call vote: 3 Yes, 0 No. Motion carried.
  - b. Motion by Secretary Blanchard, seconded by Chairwoman Dicker, regarding the appointment of full-time police officers, that Candidates #7 (Muhammed Alka) and #8 (Patrick Fajardo, Jr.) had successfully completed the medical and polygraph pre-employment checks and were certified for appointment contingent upon successful passage of the psychological examination. There being no further discussion, a roll call vote: 3 Yes, 0 No. Motion carried.
  - c. Motion by Chairwoman Dicker, seconded by Secretary Blanchard, regarding the appointment of full-time police officers, and after review of the candidates' files on request of the candidates, that Candidates #2 (Smith), #3 (Wells) and #9 (Tyrrell) had failed their Background Check. There being no further discussion, a roll call vote: 3 Yes, 0 No. Motion carried.
11. Adjournment. There being no further business for the Commission, a motion was made by Commissioner Huley, seconded by Secretary Blanchard, to adjourn at 12:32 P.M. A roll call vote was taken with the following results: 3 Yes, 0 No. Motion to adjourn carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian O'Connor  
One of the Commission's Attorneys

Approved by the Commissioners on March 3, 2016.

Velma Dicker

Velma Dicker  
Chair, Board of Fire and Police Commissioners  
City of North Chicago

ATTEST:

Vanderbilt Blanchard Jr

Vanderbilt Blanchard  
Secretary, Board of Fire and Police Commissioners  
City of North Chicago