

City of Shelton Fire Department
Board of Fire Commissioners
Minutes of Special Meeting
Thursday, October 26, 2006

Commissioners Present

Robert J. Araujo, Chairman
David Sekelsky
Merle Chase
Justin Sabatino
Bruce Kosowsky

Also Present

Assistant Chief Michael Ullrich
Captain Tim Hongo
Training Coordinator Fran Jones
Alderman John "Jack" Finn

Chairman Araujo called the Special Meeting of the Board of Fire Commissioners to order at 6:00 P.M. All those present rose for the pledge of allegiance.

Fire Chiefs Job Description

Chairman Araujo stated that the Board had met on this item this week, they talked about it and went back and forth on some items and he thinks with what is left in the year with the holidays and timing and everything else, he feels the Board has to really move on this and the next one to move on would be the Deputy Chiefs position. Chairman Araujo wanted to entertain a motion that the Board take the job description that they have, approve it, go out and post it and have the applicants back by the next meeting.

Commissioner Kosowsky would like to have some discussion on this. He thought about what was said the other night and did talk to two of his officers the other day and is trying to look at this whole thing as far with the Deputy Chief versus the Chief, where they both fit in this whole program, trying to balance it. One of the things that Commissioner Kosowsky thought of is this is a new way of doing this and having the Deputy Chief set to one particular job and there are a lot of concerns on what criteria do you put on these to get those positions. Since the Board hasn't tested for Fire Chief in 6 years and haven't tested for the assistant chiefs in a while, looking at the people who have attended the training courses that we have offered over the years, which is many courses, maybe what the Board should look at on the testing process, is when they set up the testing process

that they look at as much as possible, a system that gives everyone the opportunity to look and see if they want to apply for these jobs, and what he means by that is that maybe we should look at a written test with a percentage, and then give something for education to the person who over the last number of years has different certificates for what he or she has taken. Commissioner Kosowsky stated that he thinks the Boards goal is that we want a Fire Officer somewhere in that Chief Office positions even with the Assistant Chiefs down the road, but we need to get there. We have to set up some type of a schooling, or whatever to get there.

Chairman Araujo stated that Commissioner Kosowsky brought up a valid point during the last twelve months of our discussion, is when we get over this and get through this process, that we make sure we have a Officers Training Program, and thinks that, that's what this Board should commit to doing. We have elements of it, but we formalize it and we get an Officers Training Program so that you can bring the Lieutenants and Captains, the Assistant Chiefs, the Deputy Chief to a training program and by the time they hit that training program, they will have met the requirements.

What Commissioner Kosowsky is referring to is the education experience level where it has the four years supervisor experience and the two years must have been equal to a Captain or above. Well quite obvious, the Board hasn't made any assistant chiefs in a number of years, the field of assistant chiefs really isn't that big. Commissioner Kosowsky questioned where they got the four years from, because most of the companies have 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Lieutenant and Captain, three years. Maybe this is the area where a lot of people have a problem with, maybe this is the area the Board needs to look at on the education side and the experience side, in the testing process to award the necessary additional points for people who have taken the Fire Instructor Courses, the Safety Officer Courses, and Fire Officer I Courses so that everyone can apply for the job, and if they get through the written test, at least somewhere along the line the person who went for more education, achievement level, sees that this is where it is going to come into play. Even the experience level, someone who has been in the Fire Department for 25 years, maybe he has been Captain 4 or 5 times, but never has had the chance to be an assistant chief, maybe now this time wants to become into that system. Commissioner Kosowsky is trying to see where the balance is so that when the Board puts this job application out, that a) you get people interested in it and b) on the Deputy Chief that people don't think that the Chief is going to be doing less than the Deputy Chief, because that is the input that he is hearing, that the Deputy Chiefs job is going to be harder than the Chiefs job which we certainly don't want to put that out.

Chairman Araujo stated that there is going to be a different assignments and activities between the jobs. Commissioner Kosowsky stated that we need to change this job description along with the Deputy Chiefs description and put them out at the same time. Commissioner Araujo feels that the Boards next task has to be to finalize the Deputy

Chiefs job description and get that out as soon as possible. Commissioner Kosowsky stated that either they need to be made the same on the education, split the jobs up a little differently then what the Board first thought about, because he drafted up a thing that even over 20 years of service, maybe allow certain people during the testing procedure.

Chairman Araujo stated that Commissioner Kosowsky is now getting into the appointment process and that the Board already has an appointment process. Chairman Araujo stated that the Board spent a lot of time going through the process and what our goals are, and our tasks are to get into a training program and an education program, once the Board gets through this, we need to put our efforts into that.

Commissioner Kosowsky also feels that the way the Board is set up and the Charter is set up, and there is a method of communications between the Mayors Office and the Board of Fire Commissioners with the Chairman, so we have that role there. There is a section in here that people have difficulties with it on the supervision received, so Commissioner Kosowsky's recommendation would be to table this, and re look at certain areas, and re-write it, and then submit it and say this is it.

Chairman Araujo stated that if the Board does that, that they are not going to have anything done until January or February. Commissioner Kosowsky stated to that, that we had a very good job description that we unanimously voted on, and people didn't like it, not us, so I think that the Board did everything possible to get a Fire Chief into the Fire Department. We even had two solid candidates. Chairman Araujo stated, but that process was ended.

Commissioner Sabatino stated that he wished that these items came up when they were doing the description. Commissioner Kosowsky stated that he is doing this because he is hearing more and more people talk, and when we did this (Commissioner Sabatino and Commissioner Kosowsky) we went in as only listening, this was a draft copy we were told. Commissioner Sabatino said correct. Commissioner Kosowsky stated there was nothing agreed upon that this was it. Commissioner Sabatino stated that he could listen and listen and listen, and by that time you need to have every certification or other people want to have two years worth of experience. Commissioner Kosowsky said that the Board needs to get a balance someplace, and he feels its in the testing process. Commissioner Sabatino once again said correct, he thinks the job description is fine, he thinks that maybe the A-4 Policy needs to be changed, and that is the appointment process. Commissioner Kosowsky stated that the only other thing is the education is the 4 years and the 2 years, he feels that needs to be clarified.

Chairman Araujo said look, we could go back and forth for months, that is what I see us doing. I will put the motion on the table to accept this job description.

Commissioner Sekelsky stated that he cannot make the motion per Roberts Rules.

Commissioner Sabatino said yes he can, the Chairman can make the motion and second it, we went through this before with Chaffee and we had a ruling.

Commissioner Kosowsky stated that a Chairman can't make a motion.

Commissioner Sabatino – a Chairman could make a motion.

Chairman Araujo – a Chairman could make a motion.

Chairman Araujo – does someone else want to make a motion.

MOTION made by Commissioner Sabatino that we go forward with the job description as presented. Chairman Araujo stated that he would second the motion. Chairman Araujo asked if there was any additional discussion.

All in favor – Commissioner Sabatino and Chairman Araujo

Opposed – Commissioners Sekelsky and Kosowsky

Chairman Araujo stated that there was a tie and he would break the tie.

Commissioner Sekelsky said by Charter you cannot do that, it has to be total even number of commissioners, meaning six commissioners, not even number at the meeting, total number of commissioners is even.

Commissioner Kosowsky – that is right.

Commissioner Sekelsky stated that has been ruled by Corporation Counsel.

Commissioner Sabatino – it has been ruled both ways.

Chairman Araujo – it has been ruled both ways.

Chairman Araujo – MOTION CARRIED.

Commissioner Sekelsky stated he can't be part of this meeting because that is illegal by doing that Bob. (Chairman Araujo)

Commissioner Kosowsky picked up his belongings from the table and left the meeting.

Hydrant Request

MOTION made by Commissioner Sekelsky that the hydrant request be approved for Toas Street/Westminister Avenue. Commissioner Sabatino wanted to move to table. Seconded by Chairman Araujo to approve the hydrant request.

All in favor – Commissioner Sekelsky and Chairman Araujo

Opposed – Commissioner Sabatino

MOTION PASSED

Commissioner Sekelsky asked how that could pass. Chairman Araujo stated that there is one person not here, you and I voted in favor.

Commissioner Sabatino stated that three is a quorum.

Commissioner Sekelsky stated that you need three affirmative votes to pass a motion no matter how many people you have here, if there is only three people and one person opposes, it does not pass.

Chairman Araujo – on a hydrant request?

Commissioners Sabatino – its simple majority.

Commissioner Sekelsky – ok.

Chairman Araujo - so the hydrant request passed. Did you want to table it Commissioner Sekelsky?

Commissioner Sekelsky – I’m not tabling it. I didn’t want to table it.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Commissioner Sabatino to adjourn at 6:17 P.M. Seconded by Commissioner Sekelsky and approved unanimously.

Minutes submitted by Michele Lewis