

Police & Fire Commission

Tuesday, April 3, 2018

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1 The Meeting of the Police & Fire Commission was called to order at 5:31 p.m. on Tuesday, April
2 3, 2018. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

3
4 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Lori Olson, Tom Brewer, John Every,
5 Mark Dahlke, Tom Kennedy

6
7 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Mayor Joe Chilsen, Human Resource
8 Director Hope Burchell, Fire Chief Don Dominick, Acting Police Chief Troy Miller, Ald. Jim
9 Binash

10 11 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

12
13 Motion by Tom Brewer, second by Tom Kennedy, to approve the minutes from the previous
14 meeting as printed and on file in the City Clerk's Office.

15
16 On voice vote, motion carried.

17 18 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual)**

19
20 Mark called for anyone wishing to provide public input.

21
22 **Chad Marcon**
23 **1312 Kingswood Lane**
24 **Onalaska**

25
26 “I’m one of the investigators with the Onalaska Police Department. I’ve been employed with the
27 department for the last 21½ years. I want to take this opportunity to speak to you tonight
28 regarding the permanent promotion of Acting Chief Troy Miller, whom I have worked with my
29 entire career, from his days on patrol to second shift sergeant to Assistant Chief to now as Acting
30 Chief. I have worked with both the past two Police Chiefs [Randy Williams and Jeff Trotnic]
31 this department has hired. Both looked good on paper initially, and they also impressed many
32 people in the community and this department. Their true personalities were eventually shown in
33 our department, and this city suffered embarrassment and ridicule. I struggle to understand
34 taking the unnecessary risk of hiring someone outside the department when Chief Miller has
35 consistently proven his leadership abilities and work ethic. There is no degree, certificate, or title
36 that can replace Chief Miller’s knowledge of this department and level of respect that he has
37 from this entire department. I believe that it would be a travesty to not give him the position that
38 he has earned, that being the Chief of Police of the City of Onalaska. Thank you for your time.”

39
40 **Pete Jakowski, City of Onalaska Police Investigator**
41 **No address given**

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42 **Onalaska**

43

44 Pete noted he has been with the City of Onalaska Police Department for 33 years and said, “A
45 couple of weeks ago, Officer Proctor asked us what we would like to see in our new Police
46 Chief. I emailed him a picture of Troy Miller. But on a serious note, I also enclosed a list of
47 things we would like to see. We would like our new chief to know his officers and his support
48 staff. We certainly would like him to lead by example. We need a chief who is going to have
49 passion for the job. We need a chief who is going to be organized, and a chief who is going to
50 support their officers. We need a great listener. We need a chief who is going to be honest. We
51 need a chief who is not only going to be a leader, but a follower when need be. We need a chief
52 who is going to reward his officers for a job well done. Chief Miller fulfills every point that I
53 just made. I have known Chief Miller since he started here 21 years ago. I am proud of the
54 officer, the Chief, the Assistant Chief, the sergeant that he has become. We don’t have to look
55 for a new chief anywhere, but within our own ranks. I ask that you please reconsider opening
56 this up outside to outside agencies. Thank you.”

57

58 **Jasson Jobe, City of Onalaska Police Sergeant**

59 **No address given**

60

61 Jasson noted he has been with the City of Onalaska Police Department for 20 years and said,
62 “Through that time I’ve worked with Troy Miller not only as an officer, but I’ve also worked for
63 him as my sergeant. As a current sergeant myself, I’ve worked for him as the Assistant Chief. I
64 can almost echo everything Chad and Pete said. He has the respect of all the officers in this
65 department. But I can assure you if there’s a time he needs to step up and discipline any officer
66 he would not have any problem doing that. Even though everybody respects him, they all know
67 that he has a job to do as the leader of this department, and he has no problem doing that. I
68 would also encourage you to look at some of the former people who were on the list as Chief of
69 Police with [Jeff] Trotnic. It’s Stopla, King, and Wiener. If you research them, they were on our
70 list as Chief of Police. The departments they went to instead of coming here, they did not make
71 it in their own departments as the leaders as long as Jeff Trotnic did – some way shorter than
72 that. I just ask you to reconsider opening this up to the outside because unfortunately those are
73 the kind of candidates we seem to be attracting. Chief Miller has the integrity and trust to do this
74 job the best that he can. Thank you.”

75

76 **Shawn Colgan, Onalaska Police Department Officer**

77 **No address given**

78

79 “Good evening, Police and Fire Commission. I think by the attendance here you can see how
80 important a new, effective leader is to our department. It is imperative to us to find an effective
81 leader and mentor to guide our department for many years to come. We have that person sitting
82 here. Chief Miller has countless years of supervisory experience and has grown up, per se, in

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83 this department. He has the city, community, department, and officers in his thoughts when
84 guiding our department. He has the respect and admiration from our department. We are asking
85 that you consider him as Chief instead of investing the time and money in looking for a person
86 you already have. Look no further. Thank you.”

87

88 **Tim Berg, City of Onalaska Police Sergeant**

89 **No address given**

90

91 “I’ve been with the Onalaska Police Department for over 20 years now, and I’ve been a
92 supervisor for about 15 years. I’m not going to take a lot of your time. I agree with all of what
93 has been said. But I would just like to assure you that Troy Miller is one of the more talented
94 people I know in law enforcement. Whenever I have a question or someone else has a question,
95 he is somebody we can go to for very sound advice. I would strongly recommend that you
96 consider him for the Police Chief position.”

97

98 **Jim Binash, First District Alderperson**

99 **700 Westwood Drive**

100 **Onalaska**

101

102 “I am a strong supporter of promoting from within. [Based] on my knowledge of the Police
103 Department and Mr. Miller, I would be a strong advocate of having him be the Police Chief. I
104 think that would behoove the best interest of the city and the department and the men and women
105 who are in the department. I think if you want a true leader, I think you would find Mr. Miller
106 would be perfect for the position. Thank you.”

107

108 **Travis Gordon, City of Onalaska Police Officer**

109 **No address given**

110

111 “I’ve only been here three years. Prior to working in law enforcement, I was in the United States
112 Army for 11 years. I do have experience with different leadership and leadership changes.
113 Things fluctuate a lot, especially in the Army. I’ve seen a lot of good units turn bad because of
114 new, toxic leaders. I’ve seen bad units turn good because of powerful leaders. Troy Miller is
115 one of those people who commands a lot of respect from the people who work for him. It was
116 clear as soon as I got to this department how much respect he had. That’s not something that a
117 piece of paper or a degree is going to change. It’s something that has to be earned from his
118 experience and his leadership. I think it would be a great disservice to his loyalty to this
119 department not to consider him for the position of Chief.”

120

121 **Troy Miller, Acting City of Onalaska Police Chief**

122 **No address given**

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124 “Listening to these people speak – my officers, our officers, our supervisors, our investigators –
125 what I was going to say tonight has changed dramatically. One thing that this city prides itself
126 on, or tries to reinforce, is their retention of their employees. They talk about succession of their
127 employees. They talk about ways to advance their employees. I’ve said this to this commission
128 before, and I’ll say it again. If you had asked me a year ago, I never would have thought I would
129 be in a position to become Chief of Police, especially for this department. It’s not something I
130 really gave a lot of thought to because I thought [former Chief Trotnic] was going to be here for
131 the long haul. But I do believe – and again, I just want to thank the people who are standing up
132 here and giving me their vote of confidence – it is a job that I could succeed in, and I could do
133 proud by the city and also this commission. I guess I’m taken aback by ... I’ve said it the last
134 three weeks that this is not something I’m asking the officers to come to this meeting. They’re
135 taking it upon themselves, and I think that speaks volumes to me of how much trust they have in
136 me. I for one take that to heart. I’ve always taken great pride in my position and the job I do. I
137 do it seriously, and I treat them how I expect to be treated back. For what it’s worth to you, if I
138 am given the opportunity to lead this department further than the interim, I will do what is
139 appropriate and I will not be another embarrassment to the city like we’ve unfortunately had.
140 Thank you.”

141

142 Mark called three times for anyone else wishing to provide public input and closed that portion
143 of the meeting.

144

Consideration and possible action on the following items:

145

Item 4 – Review and consideration of changes to job descriptions for:

146

- 147 a. Chief of Police
- 148 b. Fire Chief

149

150
151
152 Hope said she had examined both job descriptions side-by-side in an attempt to ensure they had
153 similar traits, adding she believes they are scored the same when it comes to pay and
154 responsibilities. Hope said she has attempted to finalize both job descriptions and make it clear
155 what the expectations are for both positions. Hope said she believes commission members will
156 see a majority of the changes on the first page under “Job Functions.” Hope said some of the
157 other changes, particular with the Fire Chief position, involved moving items to “Related Job
158 Functions.” Hope said she believes the items under “Requirement of Work” were “pretty firm,”
159 adding she did not believe she had to make a significant amount of changes in those areas.

160

161 Hope also addressed the following under the “Training, Experience & Other Requirements”
162 section of the Police Chief job description:

163

- 164 • Item “A” reads: “*Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice or a closely related field; or*”

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165 *equivalent combination of experience from an accredited college or university in addition*
166 *to extensive law enforcement experience in police supervision, administration or a*
167 *related field. Master's Degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, or*
168 *related field is desired; related course at the FBI National Academy or Executive*
169 *Development Institute Program (State of Wisconsin program) is preferred."*

170 • Item "B" reads: *"Ten years of progressively responsible experience in the police service,*
171 *including five years of supervisory experience and five years' experience in emergency*
172 *management; or equivalent combination of work experience."*

173 • Item "C" reads: *"Certified or the ability to be certified as a law enforcement officer by*
174 *the Wisconsin Law Enforcement Training Standards Board within one year of*
175 *employment."*

176 • Item "D" reads: *"Valid Driver's License required."*

177

178 Hope addressed the "Training, Experience & Other Requirements" section of the Fire Chief job
179 description and noted Item "F" reads: *"Residence within 15 miles of the City of Onalaska's*
180 *jurisdictional limits (as required by policy)."* Hope noted that City Administrator Rindfleisch
181 had suggested changing references to Co-Emergency Managers to state that the Fire Chief is the
182 City Emergency Management Director, and also state that the Police Chief is the Assistant City
183 Emergency Management Director. Hope told commission members this item appears on the
184 April 4 Finance and Personnel Committee agenda and asked them if they would like to make any
185 changes this evening. If approved by the Finance and Personnel Committee, this item will go
186 before the Common Council for approval April 10. If approved by the Common Council, the
187 city may begin the recruitment process.

188

189 John asked if there will be issues with the Fire Chief being appointed City Emergency
190 Management Director.

191

192 Hope said the fire department typically is heavily trained in emergency management more so
193 than in the police department. Therefore, Hope said it is logical for the Fire Chief to serve as
194 City Emergency Management Director. Hope said she believes the Police Chief and the Police
195 Department also need to be involved so that there is a "duality of combined efforts." However,
196 Hope also said, "I think putting one person clearly in charge and the other one assisting with that
197 gives more of a direction of who is ultimately in charge of making sure things are done and who
198 is coordinating with that individual instead of having two co-directors and [wondering] who is
199 doing this and who is doing that."

200

201 City Administrator Rindfleisch said this is the director role "to have the plans, to be prepared,
202 update the files, run the tabletops, and so on. I think sometimes there is confusion between those
203 positions. But just for the record's sake and just to clarify, it's to identify who is going to be the
204 person in charge and who is going to be assisting that person."

205

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206 Tom Kennedy asked if the Assistant Fire Chief assumes the role of City Emergency
207 Management Director if the Fire Chief is on vacation.

208

209 Hope said yes and stated, “Essentially what we’re looking at is the emergency management
210 piece. Incident command is completely different; police and fire deal with that daily. It’s
211 putting the plan together. Who’s reporting to the Emergency Operations Center? Who do you
212 have to call in an emergency for the city? Who’s doing what roles? What are the functions of
213 those roles? ... That’s what we’re talking about when we’re talking about the emergency
214 management piece.”

215

216 Acting Police Chief Miller stated he is in support of it as it is written and noted the Fire
217 Department is usually more trained in that capacity than law enforcement.

218

219 Fire Chief Dominick said he agrees and stated, “The issue is, and it’s part of the response, we
220 have somebody who is working part-time with a great deal of work to do. It is very labor
221 intensive to keep up with everything.”

222

223 Motion by Lori, second by Tom Kennedy, to approve the changes to the job descriptions for the
224 Police Chief and Fire Chief positions.

225

226 On voice vote, motion carried.

227

228 Mark thanked the members of the Police Department who spoke during public input and said he
229 had received telephone calls at home from citizens voicing their opinions on the process. Mark
230 told those in attendance he welcomes the opinions that have been shared with the commission.

231

232 **Item 5 – Review and consideration of timeline for Chief of Police Position**

233

234 Hope said it appears that previous postings had been listed for 1½ months, and she told
235 commission members she had not listed specific dates in commission members’ packets, but
236 rather months so that she could determine some timeline ideas.

237

238 Tom Brewer asked if the timeline that was included in commission members’ packets is
239 historically how the process has unfolded.

240

241 Hope said yes and told Tom Brewer she had examined a previous timeline. Hope said processes
242 may either be shortened or lengthened, adding, “It depends on the position and how many
243 applications you get.”

244

245 Tom Brewer asked, “We’ve heard a lot of speakers inside of here. If we approve this timeline on
246 here on opening it up, do we warrant another discussion amongst us as a group for what we’ve

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247 heard tonight?”

248

249 Hope said, “That’s where this discussion can take place of whether or not you want to with the
250 timeline and how you’re going to open up the application process.” Hope also referred to Item 6
251 and said the commission may discuss Items 5 and 6 in conjunction if it so chooses.

252

253 Mark noted the Police and Fire Commission is scheduled to meet April 10.

254

255 Hope said it remains to be seen if the commission will need to meet April 10 based on what
256 transpires during discussions in Open Session and Closed Session.

257

258 Mark told Tom Brewer the commission may discuss whether or not to conduct a full search this
259 evening.

260

261 Tom Brewer said he believes the commission owes it to the members of the Police Department
262 who participated during public input to discuss whether or not to go forward with a timeline or
263 pursue another direction.

264

265 John said he has taken telephone calls from individuals who favor promoting Troy Miller to
266 Chief of Police. John said, “I haven’t heard one word of dissatisfaction, displeasure, or
267 disagreement. At this point I would say hire within and look forward to that.” John noted he had
268 examined notes he had written from telephone conversations and said, “If we do hire from
269 without, would he or she have a chip on his shoulder? I believe that would be the way to go right
270 now, in my feelings.”

271

272 Tom Kennedy said he believes the commission still should have the opportunity to interview
273 Acting Police Chief Miller.

274

275 Hope said the City of Onalaska never just promotes an individual when promoting from within
276 and told commission members an interview process must occur.

277

278 Tom Brewer said it is his understanding that the position may be posted internally, the Police and
279 Fire Commission may conduct an interview, and the position then may be posted externally, if
280 necessary.

281

282 Tom Kennedy asked how the Assistant Police Chief position would be filled if Acting Police
283 Chief Miller is promoted to Police Chief.

284

285 Hope said the city would be required to go through the hiring process again.

286

287 Mark said all the feedback he has received about Acting Police Chief Miller has been “very

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288 supportive and positive” adding that his personal experience of working with Acting Police
289 Chief Miller also has been very positive. Mark said, “I think we had talked previously the idea
290 that if you have a full search and our selection ends up all coming to Troy, it really gives him a
291 stronger position potentially to lead the department.”

292

293 Motion by John to conduct an internal search for the City of Onalaska Chief of Police Position.

294

295 Tom Brewer asked if the commission is looking to first add an internal timeline in its search,
296 conduct an interview process, and then reconvene and determine whether or not to conduct an
297 external search.

298

299 Motion by John, second by Tom Brewer, to conduct an internal search and interview process for
300 the City of Onalaska Chief of Police Position, and then determine if an external search is
301 warranted.

302

303 Mark asked to have the motion restated so that the commission may vote on it.

304

305 Tom Brewer addressed the City of Onalaska Police Chief Timeline and said he would like to add
306 to the timeline doing an internal posting for the position and conducting an interview process.
307 Then, if warranted by the Police and Fire Commission, the position would be opened externally
308 following the interview process.

309

310 Mark noted that John had a motion on the floor.

311

312 Tom Brewer suggested to John that he withdraw his motion.

313

314 Motion withdrawn.

315

316 Motion by Tom Brewer, second by John, to add to the timeline for the Chief of Police Position
317 that the position will be posted internally and an interview process will be conducted. If
318 warranted by the Police and Fire Commission following the interview process, the Chief of
319 Police Position will be opened externally.

320

321 City Administrator Rindfleisch suggested selecting a date as part of the motion regarding the
322 timeline. City Administrator Rindfleisch also suggested making the internal posting a short one
323 as there is perhaps only one qualified candidate and proceeding with the commission’s scheduled
324 April 10 meeting, at which time the interview could take place.

325

326 Hope noted that the Common Council first must approve the job descriptions at its April 10
327 meeting.

328

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329 Tom Kennedy asked if the Common Council has the capability to override the Police and Fire
330 Commission's decision.

331

332 Hope said, no the Police & Fire Commission makes the hiring decision and the Common Council
333 decides the budget.

334

335 City Administrator Rindfleisch asked if interviews would be conducted in Closed Session.

336

337 Hope said yes. Hope also asked if the commission wishes to change the posting time as the first
338 day the position may be posted is April 11.

339

340 Tom Brewer suggested that the position should be posted for one week. Tom Brewer also said it
341 is his understanding that the Common Council may approve the job descriptions at its April 10
342 meeting.

343

344 Hope said the Police Chief position would be posted from April 11 through April 18.

345

346 Lori asked if the Police and Fire Commission will need to meet April 10.

347

348 Hope said it will depend on if the commission decides on the interview questions. Hope said the
349 rest of the timeline would read as follows:

350

- 351 • Applications would be reviewed in April.
- 352 • Applications would close April 18.
- 353 • Professional Panel Interviews, and Police and Fire Commission Interviews, likely would
354 occur in both April and May.
- 355 • The applicant will be notified either in April or May.

356

357 Tom Brewer asked if the commission will be able to determine how the internal interview
358 process will take place.

359

360 Hope said that will occur in Closed Session.

361

362 On voice vote, motion carried.

363

364 **Item 6 – Review and consideration of posting and advertising for Chief of Police Position**

365

366 This item was discussed as part of Item 5.

367

368 **Item 7 – Review and consideration of supplemental application materials and application** 369 **requirements for Chief of Police Position**

Reviewed 4/6/18 by Tom Kennedy & Hope Burchell

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370

371 Hope said she will be seeking a summary of work experience and supervisory experience.

372

373 **Item 8 – Discussion of upcoming meeting date(s)**

374

375 Mark noted the commission meets again April 10 and inquired about the next meeting date.

376

377 Hope noted a Professional Panel Interview typically occurs first, and then the Police and Fire
378 Commission Interview follows. Hope said the commission may come back into Open Session
379 after Closed Session to discuss meeting dates.

380

381 **Item 9 – Closed Session:**

382

383 To consider a motion to convene in Closed Session under Section 19.85(1)(c) of the Wisconsin
384 Statutes for the purpose of considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance
385 evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or
386 exercises responsibility:

387

- 388 • Review of Fire Chief Interview Questions
- 389 • Review of Police Chief Interview Questions

390

391 If any action is required in Open Session, the Commission will reconvene in Open Session to
392 take the necessary action and/or continue on with the printed agenda.

393

394 Motion by John, second by Tom Brewer, to convene in Closed Session.

395

396 On roll call vote: Lori Olson – aye, Tom Brewer – aye, John Every – aye, Mark Dahlke – aye,
397 Tom Kennedy – aye. In Closed Session.

398

399

400 Recorded by:

401

402 Kirk Bey