

Police & Fire Commission

Monday, April 27, 2020

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1 The Meeting of the Police & Fire Commission was called to order on Monday, April 27, 2020.
2 It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice posted at City Hall.

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4 Roll call was taken with the following members present: Lori Olson, Patty Fitzpatrick, Mark
5 Dahlke, Jim Binash. Fran Finco participated by telephone.

6
7 Also Present: Human Resource Director Hope Burchell, Ald. Diane Wulf, Assistant Fire Chief
8 Troy Gudie

9 10 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**

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12 Motion by Jim, second by Patty, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting as printed
13 and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.

14
15 On voice vote, motion carried.

16 17 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes per individual)**

18
19 Mark read into the record the following letter from Jeremy Southworth, City of Onalaska
20 Lieutenant Firefighter/EMT: *“I come before the commission today not only as a near 20-year*
21 *member of this department, but also as a citizen of this community. As a member of this*
22 *department, I have served under the following individuals: Chief [Gary] Skogen, Deputy Chief*
23 *Bob Ritger, Acting Chief Gudie, Chief [Paul] Menches, Acting Chief Gudie, Chief [Don]*
24 *Dominick, Acting Chief Gudie, Chief [Billy] Hayes, and Acting Chief Gudie. If you take a look*
25 *at this list, it’s hard not to find where the consistency is, and that’s something the City of*
26 *Onalaska Fire Department desperately needs: consistency. Chief Gudie has been put into this*
27 *position time after time, and honestly, those times have been some of the best, some of our most*
28 *consistent and positive times as a department. It just seems to run smoothly during those times.*
29 *He’s committed to this city and this department, and has been for over three decades. He knows*
30 *this department, its members and the city, and the many businesses in it, as well as all of our*
31 *neighboring organizations. Now, he’s probably going to tell you he’s not interested in being the*
32 *chief, but that’s because he’s humble. So, as you begin the process tonight of finding the right fit*
33 *for the next Chief of the Onalaska Fire Department, I ask you to look for consistency and the*
34 *leadership that’s right for us.”*

35
36 Mark called three times for anyone else wishing to provide public input and closed that portion
37 of the meeting.

38
39 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**

40 41 **Item 4 – Reorganization/Election of Officers: President, Vice President & Secretary**

Reviewed 4/30/2020 by Jim Binash

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42
43 Motion by Lori, second by Jim, to nominate and elect Mark Dahlke as President of the Police
44 and Fire Commission.

45
46 On voice vote, motion carried.

47
48 Motion by Jim, second by Patty, to nominate and elect Lori Olson as Vice President of the Police
49 and Fire Commission.

50
51 On voice vote, motion carried.

52
53 Motion by Lori, second by Patty, to nominate and elect Jim Binash as Secretary of the Police and
54 Fire Commission.

55
56 On voice vote, motion carried.

57
58 **Item 5 – Acknowledgement of Resignation of Fire Chief**

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60 Mark said he is acknowledging Billy Hayes’ resignation as the City of Onalaska’s Fire Chief,
61 which was effective Friday, April 24.

62
63 **Item 6 – Review and consideration of appointing an Acting Fire Chief**

64
65 Motion by Lori, second by Jim, to appoint Assistant Fire Chief Troy Gudie as Acting Fire Chief.

66
67 On voice vote, motion carried.

68
69 **Item 7 – Review and consideration of changes to Fire Chief job description**

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71 Lori asked who is in charge of the EOC.

72
73 Hope told Lori the Fire Department currently is the primary body that is in charge, and Police
74 Chief Charles Ashbeck provides assistance. Hope also noted the Fire Department also works
75 with City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch and Mayor Kim Smith. Hope said, “When we looked
76 at this we really felt like it really needed to be more of a team. That’s why we made that change,
77 and we’ll likely be bringing that change forward with the Police Chief as well. At this point we
78 just needed to get something forward with the Fire Chief.”

79
80 Hope told commission members she had made changes to the essential job functions and edited
81 some of the language within. Hope said she also had updated the physical requirements for the
82 job into the ADA format, and she described the majority of the changes she had made as being

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83 minor. Hope referred to Section C under the “Training, Experience, and Other Requirements”
84 section of the job description and said she had included “preferred” because she believes some of
85 the language had been included at the request of former Fire Chief Dominick. Hope also said
86 she had included the word “preferred” because she was uncertain if it necessarily was required.
87 Hope added, “I think this would open up our recruitment up for more opportunities for
88 candidates rather than closing that door. I felt that that would make more sense to say ‘preferred’
89 rather than ‘required.’ ”

90

91 Fran asked if the underlined sections of the job description are what is being added.

92

93 Hope told Fran, “I’m adding that, and the crossed-out [sections are what] I’m changing.”

94

95 Motion by Jim, second by Patty, to accept the changes to Fire Chief job description.

96

97 On voice vote, motion carried.

98

99 **Item 8 – Review and consideration of timeline for Fire Chief recruitment**

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101 Hope told commission members she thought the best course of action to take is to leave the
102 position open until it is filled. Hope said, “That was, as we get candidates in, kind of like what
103 we did with the Police Chief process this last time, so that we’re not closing it and then
104 potentially having to reopen it, that we can take after a certain deadline that we would accept
105 applications. We would have a first look at applications for, like, June 1, and then review those
106 applications and set up dates for when we would have interviews and go through that process.
107 Then if the Police and Fire Commission decided they weren’t interested in any of the candidates
108 after the first review, the process would remain open. A decision could be made to widen the
109 net, to do more advertising, or whatever the case may be.”

110

111 Fran, a former Onalaska School District Superintendent, noted he had participated in the hiring
112 process for superintendents and said individuals rush to meet the deadline if there is one in place,
113 while prospective candidates might not hurry if there is no deadline in place. Fran suggested
114 also having a date when applications will start being reviewed if the position will be left open
115 until it is filled. Fran said, “That way people will be able to know that if they want to be in on
116 the first round, they’d better get [their application] in by that certain date.”

117

118 Hope asked commission members if they want applicants to submit resumes by the end of May if
119 the Police and Fire Commission chooses to meet the first week of June.

120

121 Lori noted the first review is June 1.

122

123 Hope asked if candidates should submit resumes by June 1, with the Police and Fire Commission

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124 meeting sometime after that date. Hope told Fran she can inform applicants on the job posting
125 that they need to submit their resumes by June 1 if they wish to be considered as part of the first
126 review.

127

128 Motion by Lori, second by Jim, to approve the timeline for Fire Chief recruitment.

129

130 On voice vote, motion carried.

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132 **Item 9 – Closed Session:**

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

138

- 139 • Interview of Firefighter/EMT Candidates and to Take Any Action Deemed Necessary to
140 Hire or Establish an Eligibility List

141

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

144

145 Motion by Jim, second by Lori, to convene in Closed Session.

146

147 On roll call vote: Lori Olson – aye, Fran Finco – aye, Patty Fitzpatrick – aye, Mark Dahlke –
148 aye, Jim Binash – aye. In Closed Session.

149

150 Hope noted the Police and Fire Commission is now in Open Session.

151

152 Motion by Lori, second by Jim, to extend offers to the No. 1 and No. 2 candidates for the
153 Firefighter/EMT position, contingent upon passing a background investigation, psychological
154 exam, physical and physical agility test, and to place the remaining candidates on the list on an
155 eligibility list for one year.

156

157 On voice vote, motion carried.

158

159 **Adjournment**

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161 Motion by Jim, second by Patty, to adjourn at 9:13 p.m.

162

163 On voice vote, motion carried.

164

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166 Recorded by:

167

168 Kirk Bey