

WEST LAFAYETTE POLICE MERIT COMMISSION MINUTES  
September 14, 2015

The West Lafayette Police Merit Commission met in regular session in Room 211 at the Morton Center on September 14, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

PRESENT: Commission President Shafer, Vice President Corrigan, and Commissioner Troyer

ABSENT: Commissioners No and Kirkpatrick

ALSO PRESENT: Deputy Chief Leroux, Sgt. Choate and Attorney Eric Burns.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Commission President Shafer called the meeting to order. Commission President Shafer asked to reflect the absence of Commissioner No and Kirkpatrick in the minutes. President Shafer asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the July meeting. Commissioner Troyer moved that the minutes be approved. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Corrigan. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

We received an email from Commissioner No on the 24<sup>th</sup> of August. He would like to change the meeting night to accommodate his schedule. President Shafer has reviewed his schedule and is limited at this time as to how he can change it and would like to open it up for discussion. Commissioner Troyer would like it to be left as it is. Commissioner Corrigan stated that the meetings have not been attended very well by some of the commissioners. President Shafer said that the minutes from the website can be checked to see the attendance of the Merit Commission Meetings. Commissioner Troyer moved that the meetings be left as they are, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month with Commissioner Corrigan seconding that motion. The motion was passed by a unanimous voice vote. President Shafer will get in touch with Dr. No and let him know of the decision made by the merit commission.

OLD BUSINESS:

Commission President Shafer asked for a report of the recent physical testing and written testing of the potential new hires. Sgt. Choate said there were 44 applicants, 35 were qualified with 22 showing up the day of the testing. 2 failed the physical part with 20 taking the written exam. President Shafer asked about the results of the testing with Sgt. Choate stating that there were no results at this time. Shafer commented that there were some very qualified applicants there, physically with Choate stating that there were college and military backgrounds for the testing.

Commissioner Corrigan asked if there were two openings right now with Sgt. Choate stating that there were. Deputy Chief Leroux stated that there were indeed 2 openings right now. Commissioner Corrigan asked about the new hires at the academy with Sgt. Choate stating that they would be finished about November 6<sup>th</sup> and that they were doing very well. Sgt. Choate gets reports every week, they are scoring in the 90s on their written exams with one recruit scoring expert in firearms. Deputy Chief Leroux explained that they would still have to be in the FTO program when they get back from the academy with Sgt. Choate saying that the time would be 4 months in the FTO program. Next spring until they are on their own. President Shafer asked Attorney Eric Burns where we stand on our new hire list, if we had depleted that or not with Burns explaining that he didn't have that information right now but will email President Shafer. Deputy Chief Leroux said that he believed there were only one or two applicants left on the list.

President Shafer commented that Sgt. Choate has been very busy with recruiting and a new approach to the website relative to getting new hires interested in WLPD. Sgt. Choate explained that he has received help from many people including our IT department in updating the city's website as well as the recruitment part of the website. He is pushing forward with the idea of a business card. Sgt. Choate handed out examples of the business card to the commission explaining everything that was on it, including pay, requirements, also has a QR code on it which when you scan it, you are taken directly to the recruitment website. President Shafer has been helping out by doing photographs of equipment and officers and things like that trying to make it more attractive for potential recruits. The cards were \$62 for 2000 cards and that money was taken out of the Merit Commission money donated. The plan is to update the cards every year with the officers to assist in distributing to public. Sgt. Choate explained that Lt. Vanvactor had done research in the past and he also assisted in the new recruitment process.

Sgt. Choate polled the applicants at the testing and found out that **ILEA** website was the biggest factor where people found out when we were testing. The second one was word of mouth....Sgt. Choate will make a concerted effort to let all officers know when we are hiring and the last one was **Police1.com** which is a nationwide free site.

President Shafer asked Sgt. Choate to explain the concept of more photographs on the website and why. Sgt. Choate explained that he wanted to inundate the website with things that we have at the department, especially technology, the new generation is really into technology so the idea is to get out photos not only of officers interacting with people and pictures of our equipment, our vehicles, our department so that it draws people in when they see it, the idea making it to "sell" the department with pictures instead of words. President Shafer asked about sharing these images with descriptions on our Facebook account with Sgt. Choate explaining that Tracy from IT has been getting with Cindy Marion, who manages our Facebook account. Tracy is hoping to have everything done by January 2016.

Commissioner Troyer asked about college recruitment days with Sgt. Choate explaining that has been done before by Lt. Watson and Lt. Vanvactor and the results were not that great. The officers were not approached, and they were going to recruitments that were combined with business and other areas not specific to law enforcement.

Lt. Gallagher is in charge of our intern program and he reached out to Purdue to his contact, Bill Coghill, who is in charge of the internship program. Lt. Gallagher asked if we could come and speak in his criminal justice classes and it was received well. Lt. Gallagher talked from the side of dealing with interns and Sgt. Choate talked to them about recruitment, reached out, gave them our email addresses and phone numbers trying to be a resource for them, and since that time Sgt. Choate has been approached twice on the street and has been getting emails as a direct result of that. President Shafer commented that one of the interns was in the last testing. Deputy Chief Leroux said that we had an intern program in the past and it went by the wayside, and now we are focusing on making that program active again with currently having 2 interns presently, one female from Purdue and one male from Purdue. We are reaching out to Ivy Tech as well. Lt. Gallagher has really put a lot of effort and energy in the intern program.

Commissioner Troyer spoke about partnering with local departments and setting up something on smaller campuses specific to law enforcement, would we be willing to check into that? Sgt Choate said he got ideas from kids in class one being doing a mock PT test at the Co Rec, which would be nothing more than letting them see what it involves. Deputy Chief Leroux said that the people involved in the recruiting process are doing a great job and when we do get candidates to the Merit Commission they are highly qualified and great applicants. He believes that the people involved are doing a great job "branding" the department and getting applicants that "fit in" with the department. Shafer said that the process they are doing in recruitment and getting candidates to the Merit Commission is great.

#### CHIEF'S REPORT:

Calls for services up from July. A couple exciting things that happened in August, one being that for the first time in the departments recent history we launched a full time traffic unit which is a motorcycle unit, and Sgt. Philhower is heading up that department. Officer Slifer is also in that department. Both went to a two week intensive training course. They are focusing on school zones and neighborhood traffic. When they are unable to do the traffic enforcement on motorcycles, they will do that same job in a squad car. Deputy Chief Leroux believes this addition will be a huge benefit to our police department. Comments were made by the commissioners about how visible they have been and that it's appreciated.

The second thing that Deputy Chief spoke of is the moving of our dispatch center to the Purdue Police Dept. Capt. Harris was in charge of that, along with the help of others it went smoothly. Deputy Chief Leroux explained that state law prevents us from having our own dispatch center. Each county is allowed two with the exception of the university, which can have its own, so there are two in the county already, those being Tippecanoe County Sheriff's Department and Lafayette Police Dept. Since we are annexed with Purdue, it only made sense to be partnered with them.

Sgt. Choate said Chief Dombkowski approached him about doing a PR detail, it being two-fold...Bob FM, a local radio station, wanted someone to do radio reports on game day, with Sgt. Philhower filling that position; the other part of the PR detail was that they were looking for someone to do a weekly radio show, called "Talk Shop With a Cop" with the Chief asking Sgt. Choate to do that. The show is informative and fun and hopefully will become a "call in" show.

Commissioner Troyer wanted to thank the department for the honor they bestowed upon his mother.

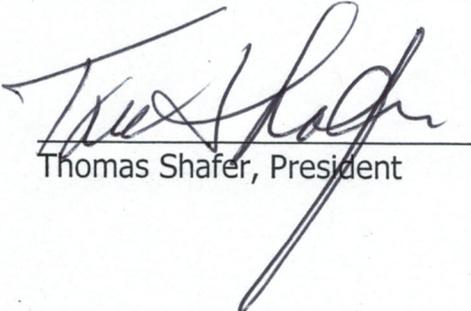
Commission President Shafer asked for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Troyer made that motion with Commissioner Corrigan seconding it. The motion was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

The next meeting will be held on October 12, 2015 at 7:00 pm at the Morton Center.

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Dr. Song No, Secretary

Attest:



Thomas Shafer, President