

POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION

Date/Time: Tuesday, December 17, 2013 at 8:30 a.m.
Location: Conference Room – Wausau Public Safety Building, 515 Grand Avenue, Wausau, WI
Members Present: D. Huntimer (C), C. Bahr, W. Graef, L. Jorstad, T. Paterson
Member Absent: None
Others Present: Mayor Tipple, A. Adrian, Q. Ambrosius, A. Antolik, D. Beula, R. Buss, K. Cortright, C. Eberle, J. Finke, J. Hardel, K. Hicks, A. Jacobson, J. Kannenberg, S. Kariger, J. Kopp, T. Krueger, M. Loy, B. Ludwig, M. Marks, H. Prausa, S. Robers, G. Skidmore, T. Tautges, M. Walker, C. Wiesman, S. Woller, Mike Hosking- Voorhees & Associates.

In accordance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin State Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted at Wausau City Hall and the Public Safety Building, and emailed to the Wausau Daily Herald and City Pages in the proper manner.

Communication and Listening Session by the PFC in regards to the Fire Department transition plan, recruitment timeline for the Fire Chief, and to seek input from Fire Department members on priorities, goals and issues going forward that should be considered in selecting a new Fire Chief.

Loy explained the purpose of the listening session to the group. Huntimer spoke to the group on how the decision was made to choose Police Chief Hardel as the interim Fire Chief for the department.

Hardel spoke to the group about what the Fire Department can expect of him as the interim Fire Chief. Hardel will provide administrative oversight to the department and be available to help in any capacity that he is needed.

Loy explained the recruitment process of the Fire Chief position to the group, the reasoning for using a consultant to find candidates for the position, and the timeline for hiring a new Fire Chief.

A round table discussion began by Hardel asking the Fire Department staff present various questions to understand what type of individual they feel would be the best choice for the new Fire Chief for the Wausau Fire Department. The staff discussed the characteristics they want in the new Fire Chief and their desire to keep the department progressive.

Approval of the minutes of 11/19/2013, 11/22/2013, 12/05/2013, 12/06/2013 meetings. Motion made by Jorstad to approve the 11/19/2013, 11/22/2013, 12/05/2013, and 12/06/2013 Police and Fire Commission meeting minutes. Second by Patterson. All ayes. Motion passes unanimously.

Police Department Operations. Chief Hardel updated the commission on the following:

Burglary arrests - gave an update on the recent burglary arrests and stated that the WPD is now working with other agencies due to findings during their investigations.

New officer recruitment update – written test and initial FTO interviews have been conducted. The recruitment will continue with FTO and 1st Command Interviews on December 20th.

Animal Control contract update – Ashlee Bishop has declared approximately 24 dogs as dangerous. The contract for Everest Metro will begin on January 1, 2014, and Bishop will begin offering services for the Everest Metro area. This is a 1 year contract and will be evaluated at the end of 2014. Graef asked what portion of the cost Everest Metro will provide. Hardel stated that they cover 18% of the program cost.

Evidence Custodian update – Aimee Castillo was hired on December 16th. Paul Luoma (retired) will be coming back in to train Castillo in January.

Landlord licensing update – there will be a landlord licensing program, and officers are busy setting up the criteria for the landlord licensing academy.

Nuisance Landlord declaration – Hardel informed the commission that the WPD issued their first declaration against a local landlord.

Holiday gathering date and location – it was decided that a gathering will take place at City Grill and Hardel will put together some dates. Motion made by Bahr to approve the Chief's report. Second by Graef. All ayes. Motion passes unanimously.

Fire Department Operations. Chief Buchberger updated the commission on the following:

'Keep the Wreath Green' update – two recent fires broke out, one at the Greenwood Hill's smokehouse, and the other at Day's Inn.

Deputy Chief Rentmeester in AL – Rentmeester traveled to Birmingham, AL to help develop a promotional exam to be used in the southern states. Buchberger had no feedback at the time of the meeting.

Department Retirements in 2014 – at least 4 retirements are expected at this time (2 lieutenants and 2 engineers). Buchberger said that all 3 battalion chiefs are in the window for retirement; he has not received any notices. Jorstad asked if commission approval is needed to fill those positions (the Lieutenants and Engineers). Loy stated that the commission approved an eligibility list to be utilized for any upcoming Lieutenant vacancies; engineers are promoted by contract.

The SAFER fire district – on track to be operational by January 1, 2014. Hardel asked if this was done by a mutual aid request. Buchberger said that at this time it is. Hardel also asked about billing. Buchberger said that departments do not bill each other. Questions were asked about fire response from other departments and the use of off-duty employees.

Motion made by Jorstad to approve the Chief's report. Second by Bahr. All ayes. Motion passes unanimously.

Introduction of Voorhees Associates LLC and Discussion of the Recruitment Process for the Fire Chief.

Mike Hosking of Voorhees Associates LLC spoke to the commission about the process used to fill positions using Voorhees as a consultant. Voorhees will announce the position through various websites, publications, emails, and letters, create a brochure describing the City of Wausau and the position, collect resumes and narrow candidate pool, conduct background and reference checks, and provide the top candidate resumes to the City for consideration. Motion made by Jorstad to hire Voorhees Associates LLC for the recruitment of the City of Wausau Fire Chief. Second by Graef. All ayes. Motion passes unanimously.

Review the Results of the Fire Department Survey on the Recruitment of the Fire Chief. Loy said the feedback from the survey was quite consistent and asked if the commission wanted to further discuss any findings. Graef asked if the requirement of having a bachelor's degree and desire to have someone who has gone through the ranks will narrow the amount of qualified candidates. Buchberger answered that fire department employees who wish to further their career in a department pursue higher education as it is typically a requirement; therefore it should not affect the amount of qualified candidates. The Wausau Fire Department requires certain certifications and degrees in order to be promoted to certain positions. Bahr asked if tours of all the fire stations could be arranged for the commission. Discussion took place of setting up a schedule to tour all the fire stations. Hardel shared that in reviewing the survey comments, he is amazed at how proud all of the fire department employees are of the level of service that they provide the community and the level of training the employees have. Also brought up were the peer focus groups that Don Ryder conducted and the wish for peer focus groups to be held in the future, the importance of communication and leadership moving forward. Bahr commended Buchberger on the progress he made at the fire department during his time as Fire Chief. Buchberger thanked Bahr and said that he feels he has taken the department as far as he can and hopes the new Fire Chief will take the department to the next level.

Closed Session pursuant to 19.85(1)(f) of the Wisconsin State statutes for the purpose of the investigation of charges against specific persons except where par (b) applies which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems or investigations. Motion made to enter into Closed Session by Bahr. Second by Jorstad. All ayes. Motion passes unanimously. Roll call was taken of present Police and Fire Commission members to include Huntimer, Jorstad, Bahr, Graef, and Patterson.

Open Session – reconvene meeting into open session. Motion made to reconvene into open session by Graef. Second by Bahr. All ayes. Motion passes unanimously. Roll call was taken of present Police and Fire Commission members to include Huntimer, Jorstad, Bahr, Graef, and Patterson. No action taken in closed session.

New Business for Placement on the next Agenda. Huntimer stated that he would like the commission to view the recording of the Fire Study presentation, and also conduct a tour of the jail after the fire facilities tours are complete. Graef mentioned that he will not be able to attend the next meeting on January 21, 2014. Loy will provide an update of the Fire Chief recruitment.

Motion made by Patterson to adjourn. Second by Graef. All ayes. Motion passes unanimously.