Brian Sturdivant, Fire Chief

CITY OF LANSING

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS

120 E. SHIAWASSEE ST., LANSING MI 48933
(517) 483-4200 | LANSINGMI.GOV/FIRE

Andy Schor, Mayor

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2023, | 5:30 PM |

LFD STATION #1 | 120 E. SHIAWASSEE ST | LANSING MI

Fire Commissioners
1st Ward Barbara Lawrence – Vice-Chair
2nd Ward Jarrod LeRue
3rd Ward Kathleen Tobe
4th Ward Gina Nelson
At-Large Steve Purchase –Chair
At-Large Rodney Singleton
At-Large Charles Willis
At-Large Kris Singh

1. Call to Order – Establish Quorum - 5:32 p.m.
   1.1. Present: Barbara Lawrence, Jarrod LeRue, Gina Nelson, Steven Purchase, Rodney Singleton, Charles Willis, Kris Singh
   1.2. Absent: Kathleen Tobe

2. Additions to Agenda:
   None

3. Approval of Minutes:
   3.1. June 14, 2023 minutes approved with amendments. Those amendments include corrections to typos and an inclusion of discussion of posting meeting minutes.

4. Public Comment – Agenda Items (Time Limit: 3 Minutes):
   4.1. None

5. Review Communications
   5.1. Unit Citation from Meridian Township Police Department
   5.2. Chief Sturdivant spoke on the excellent work that LFD did during the Okemos School shutdown. Despite it being a hoax LFD performed admirably and the response was credible and the response seamless.

6. Comments from Chair
   6.1. Chair Purchase brought Council meeting schedules for the Wards (as seen in the Agenda Packet) across the City as discussed last meeting so that the commissioners may attend the meetings to advocate for the needs of LFD. Purchase expressed the intent for commissioners to attend 1-2 meetings before the end of the year. He will work with the commissioners to coordinate those meetings.
   6.2. Chief Sturdivant shares that this is an opportunity for the commissioners to be a force multiplier. Commissioners know the concerns of the department and can share with the council. By hearing the information from several different sources and keeping it as a current topic, it will be easier for the council to recall the needs of the department at budget hearings.
   6.3. Chair Purchase shares that he has experienced the impact that speaking at council meetings can have on budget proposals firsthand in previous years.
   6.4. Labor states that they are planning to attend several council meetings as well.

7. Presentations
   7.1. None

8. Fire Administration Report – Chief Sturdivant

8.1. Chief has been out of the office for most of the previous month but shared that the department progressed as it should. There will be a more in-depth report next month.
8.2. The burn ban was lifted at the end of June.
8.3. July 4th fireworks were managed well by the department. There was one structure fire that was limited to a garage with limited damage and no injuries. There were one or two firefighter injuries that we documented but they did not seek any additional care.
8.4. LFD received their order of two new Zodiac boats. In service training for the new boats is happening on the river. LFD is currently researching new motors. The current motors are adequate for now but are not a long-term solution. There is about a 6 month turn time for new motors so the sooner ordered the better. LFD is also looking to expand their water rescue fleet and is still researching resources for that.
8.5. LFD is finalizing the process for the promotional process. The plan is to have a written exam for captains and battalion chief as ranks, and then specific assessments for assignments. Chief spoke on how while LFD values seniority they also look at merit. Seniority is important but merit allows LFD to tap into all available resources and helps keep the talent in Lansing. This is because employees that have the skills and abilities to be promoted won't have to wait as long to receive that status if they are able to perform at that level.
8.6. Chief is having conversations with Labor and HR regarding this system of promotion. LFD is on the cusp on modern standards for both fire service and the business community. This newer method will appeal to current team members and younger generations.
8.7. Commissioner Lawrence asks how merit is measured.
8.8. Chief Sturdivant responds that they are looking at what the employee brings to the table early on and that he values formal education. Merit can be show in a "first to come, last to leave" mentality along with more tangible efforts such as "engineer for five years, acting captain, etc." Chief does not want to devalue what younger generations are bringing to the table (such as formal education acquired before joining the department).
8.9. Commissioner Lawrence states that it is a significant change and she is happy to hear that input from different stakeholders is being taken into account.
8.10. Chief states that historically there has been a lot of focus on the operations side of the business. However, currently the bulk of the work is not operations. It's people management and he looks forward to the shift towards focusing on people and not just incidents. LFD needs to focus on working with five generations as old school methods alone are not effective.
8.11. Commissioner Singh requests clarification on captains tests. He proposes that if he was a captain for maintenance alarm officer would he be qualified to be a suppression officer, as that is not his specialty?
8.12. Chief Sturdivant states that in the system he envisions, a captain is a captain, and a system that us designed so there's more flexibility to move from department to department.
8.13. Commissioner Singh asks would that captain need additional training to change divisions.
8.14. Chief replies that yes additional training would be required but why not have that training available to everyone so there can be more interdepartmental cooperation and so that individuals are not as pigeonholed.
8.15. Discussion of Chief's vision for assessment for promotions, further touching on points detailed above.
8.16. Commissioner Singh expresses concern over division hopping.
8.17. Chief validates concerns but they are working to ensure that that is addressed. Some of this work is done with Labor and there will be MOU's and MOA's.
8.18. Hiring update: Physical agility practice tests and actual tests occurred in mid-July. After that there are two tiered interviews. LFD is ensuring that the candidates hiring will be a good fit.
8.19. There is discussion on the ongoing restructuring of LFD. HR and LFD has looked at the contract language and they are going forward with the process.
8.20. Chair Purchase requests copy of the new union contract for the board's review and information.
8.21. Commissioner Nelson requests more information on communication between departments and Chief Sturdivant shares how the local departments have regular meetings. One topic of discussion is how the different jurisdictions communicate and coordinate responses.

9. Old Business
   9.1. Approval of LexiPol Policies. Chair Purchase proposes a vote on policies included in agenda packet.
   9.2. Commissioner Lawrence requests clarification on process. There is a discussion on the process including that the policies need to be approved by the board and then sent to City Clerk to be officially recorded.
   9.3. Policies are approved by unanimous consent.
   9.4. Chair and Vice Chair nominations and elections.
   9.5. Floor is opened for nominations for Chair. Stephen Purchase is nominated by Commissioner Nelson. No additional nominations. Vice Chair Lawrence takes the order to conduct the vote. There is no discussion and all vote in favor.
   9.6. Floor is opened for nominations for Vice Chair. Barbara Lawrence is nominated. No additional nominations. There is no discussion and all vote in favor.

10. New Business
   10.1. Request for advance of sick leave from Jordan Spitzley. Spitzley broke his hand off duty and has used his accrued sick leave. His sick leave balance was low due to parenting and contracting COVID several times throughout the pandemic. He has also used some donated sick leave but due to the method the City uses he is unable to see how much sick leave has been donated. Jordan speaks on how he is from Lansing and is looking forward to staying in the area and continuing to contribute to his community.
   10.2. There is discission amongst the commissioners, as well as some remarks from the Chief. Chief's remarks that as long as all members receive the same consideration and there is no bias or favoritism it is fair to request the time. There is requests for clarification on how leave is granted and if it can be granted provisionally. It cannot be granted provisionally.
   10.3. Commissioner Willis proposes six days of advance leave time is granted to Jordan Spitzley. Chair Purchase calls for a vote. There is no further discission and it passes by unanimous consent.
   10.4. Jordan Spitzley thanks the board for their time.

11. Request for Commissioners to be Excused.
   11.1. Kathy Tobe is excused unanimously.

12. Commissioner Comments
   12.1. Commissioner Willis will not be at the next meeting.
   12.2. Commissioner Lawrence requests clarification on meeting locations and is directed to a current schedule. There is some discussion on the space and construction at some locations limited meeting space.
   12.3. Commissioner Singh is swimming the Mackinaw Strait.

13. Public Comment
   13.1. None

14. General Order
   14.1. None

15. Adjournment
   15.1. 7:10 pm

Minutes submitted Monday, July 24th by Jules Overfelt

Jules Overfelt *(they/she)*

Administrative Specialist

Lansing Fire Dept

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