

KIRKLAND CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Special Meeting - April 18th, 2023

Present (via Zoom):

Chairperson Mark Nelson

Commissioner Doug Jacobson

Commissioner Suzanne Frindt

Deputy Chief of Police Todd Akسدal

Deputy Fire Chief Bill Newbold

Fire Chief Joe Sanford

Human Resources Director/Interim Civil Service Commission Secretary Truc Dever

- I. Introduce new Commissioner, Suzanne Frindt
 - a. Commissioner Frindt shared her background as a businessperson and business consultant for non-profit and for-profit organizations. She has been mostly engaged in her service globally, and now has this local engagement opportunity.
- II. Civil Service Appointment of Interim Secretary/Chief Examiner
 - a. Secretary Morga is currently unavailable. Human Resources Director Truc Dever requested to be appointed as the Interim Secretary in his absence.
 - b. Chairperson Nelson motioned to appoint Dever as Interim Secretary. Commissioner Jacobson seconded.**
- III. Election of new Commission Chairperson
 - a. Part 3, Section 1 of Civil Service Commission (CSC) Rules require that when a new commissioner joins, the Commission must elect a new chairperson.
 - b. Commissioner Jacobson moved to have Commissioner Nelson continue as the Chair of the Commission. Commissioner Frindt seconded.**
 - c. Chairperson Nelson noted that he is willing to serve as a Chair. Elections will come up again soon, and he encourages others to serve as Chair too.
- IV. Certification of Entry Level Firefighter Candidate List
 - a. Memo that was prepared by the HR Director, and Deputy Chief Newbold was present to explain.
 - b. Deputy Chief Newbold gave background on the interview process and list.
 - i. The list consists of 23 candidates that have been through our interview process. For this recruitment cycle, they started with 224 applicants who were accepted through the process, and they conducted 3 rounds of interviews. Into the 3rd round, they had 38 of the original applicants, and of those, 23 were included on the eligibility list to be certified by the CSC.
 - ii. If the Commission approves the list, the Fire Chiefs will invite a number of those candidates (based on the # of available positions) for a Chief's interview.
 - iii. Fire is looking to hire for 10 positions and will bring 12 names forward from the eligibility list if it's certified. From those 12 names, they hope to be able to select and qualify recruits to fill the positions.

- iv. Deputy Fire Chief Newbold noted that the landscape has changed for hiring in Fire. In the past, there might have been 500 - 1,000 applicants applying for a handful of positions. Now, there are enormous numbers of vacancies in Fire all across the region with far fewer applicants than in the past.
- v. To summarize the regional hiring landscape, DC Newbold shared that Kirkland is looking to hire 10 people, Bothell is hiring 10 people, South King County is hiring 70 people, and Seattle will be hiring close to 150 people. The numbers are now 200 to 250 be hired regionally. There are 7 to 9 agencies competing for the same candidates.
- c. Commissioner Frindt asked about how the process begins and how applicants are rejected. HR Director Dever explained that applicants go through the various application phases, and if they don't pass a phase they are notified and have the opportunity to schedule time to review notes from interviews so they can use the feedback if they apply in the future.
- d. Commissioner Frindt confirmed her understanding of the recruitment process. Deputy Chief Newbold confirmed that from the 23 people on the candidate list, Fire will reach out to the top 12, complete Chief's interviews with them, and then select the top 10 to give conditional offers to. The candidates have a period to respond and could simultaneously be recruited by other agencies. If a candidate accepts, the offer is conditional based on successful completion of a medical physical, psychological evaluation, and background check. If they successfully complete those and a physical assessment, an offer will be confirmed. We want to keep them engaged until the fire academy starts in August, but some may withdraw or accept other offers if there is an earlier start date. If a candidate withdraws, Fire would go back to the list and call in additional people for additional interviews.
- e. Commissioner Frindt asked about the timing for academies and when other jurisdictions have theirs. Deputy Chief Newbold explained that Fire has academies available in February & August, and that this works well with staff availability and weather. Kirkland partners with other agencies, for example a current academy partnership is with Bothell.
- f. Commissioner Frindt asked if Kirkland's pay and compensation package is competitive with other jurisdictions. Deputy Chief Newbold answered that we remain competitive but have not had a settled contract since 2021. The information candidates are seeing is from a contract that has expired. Once we complete the new contract, Kirkland will be competitive throughout the market.
- g. Commissioner Frindt asked how often these lists are brought to the CSC. Deputy Chief Newbold explained that Fire is on the downward side of hiring many Firefighters. This list is good for 12 months; usually it gets exhausted before the list expires. If Fire has additional vacancies, they may be back with another list within a year.
 - i. Chairperson Nelson explained that he believes the CSC's responsibility is to support Police and Fire; during his time on the CSC the Commission has never been unwilling to entertain a new list if a list expired or everyone was hired off the list.

- ii. HR Director Dever confirmed that it's a partnership between the City and CSC; if hiring needs arise in Police and Fire, it will be communicated with CSC. Throughout the year, many different lists will be brought to the CSC including promotions and eligibility lists. If there's a testing event, the Commission will be notified since it leads to the creation of a list.
 - iii. Chairperson Nelson expressed that he hopes both Fire and Police Departments know they can come to the CSC to get a new list certified if their lists expire.
 - 1. Deputy Chief Newbold confirmed that CSC is supportive and flexible if Fire need a new or extended list. There are standing monthly meetings, but special meetings can be requested if needed to stay nimble, like this meeting.
- h. Chairperson Nelson asked if the City knows how many people on this list have applied to other agencies. Deputy Chief Newbold answered that it's unknown, but there's more flexibility in the Chief's interviews to get to know candidates, ask if they're considering other agencies, and learn what makes them want to work for Kirkland instead of others.
- i. Chairperson Nelson brought up that the best time to extend an offer is when the candidate is really interested in accepting. Is there any way to extend the offer sooner and have them on payroll prior to academy?
 - i. HR Director Dever informed the group that the City is aware of this issue and HR is having discussions with City leadership about it. The delay to starting academy and receiving a job offer can and has led to candidates not accepting Kirkland's offer. The City would like to maintain better communication, and have the new hires invested in Kirkland. The City Manager is considering providing job offers and putting new hires on payroll earlier doing non-emergency work. We are exploring options.
 - ii. Deputy Chief Newbold added that we provide a conditional job offer, and once the candidates complete those conditions, we provide them with a formal and secure job offer, which is one more step in solidifying their career choice. Their start date may be 60 or 90 days after a formal offer, which allows some new hires to make a softer exit from their current career.
- j. Deputy Chief Aksdal explained that Police has a pre-academy program. Sometimes it's several months before they start in academy, so this program allows for training, policies, ordering equipment, and the employees are ready to go by the time academy starts.
 - i. Chairperson Nelson asked if Police has noticed attrition during the pre-academy period. Deputy Chief Aksdal said he has not seen anyone leave pre-academy; although some may leave if they do not pass the academy.
- k. **Chairperson Nelson motioned to certify the list of 23 names. Commissioner Jacobson seconded.** Chairperson Nelson asked Chief Examiner Dever to add signature and date line to the certified list document. Chairperson Nelson emphasized the sooner we can get highly qualified applicants from the top of the list signed on with Kirkland, the better.

V. Adjourned at 4:33pm