

**NOBLESVILLE FIREFIGHTER MERIT COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 20, 2023  
4:00 P.M.**

Commissioner Sarah Russell Goddard called the September 20, 2023 Noblesville Firefighter Merit Commission Meeting to order.

Commissioners present were:

**COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Commissioner Sarah Russell Goddard  
Commissioner Dale Martz  
Commissioner Chris Renner

Chief Matt Mitchell and Assistant Chief Uriah Eddingfield (representing the Noblesville Fire Department) and attorney Mark Wohlford were all present for the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Renner motioned to approve the minutes from the May 17, 2023 Merit Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Martz seconded the motion.

**VOTE TO APPROVE THE MAY 17, 2023 MINUTES**

Commissioner Goddard	Aye
Commissioner Martz	Aye
Commissioner Renner	Aye

The motion was passed.

Commissioner Renner motioned to approve the minutes from the June 21, 2023 Merit Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Martz seconded the motion.

**VOTE TO APPROVE THE JUNE 21, 2023 MINUTES**

Commissioner Goddard	Aye
Commissioner Martz	Aye
Commissioner Renner	Aye

The motion was passed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Agenda Item 1: Merit Commission to consider approval of the 2023 NFD Engineer Process (Assistant Chief Uriah Eddingfield)

Chief Eddingfield said he is presenting the Engineer Process which is done every two years and is now due again. This will be a written process, a hands-on driving course, and a hands-on operating/pumping course. Chief Eddingfield is asking for one variance. He said in the Professional Development Manual [PDM], there is an aerial operator certification that needs to be part of this process. However, since it was a short timeframe with the PDM being approved in March, we haven't had a chance and the state hasn't had a chance to put this certification class on yet. Because of this, he asked that this requirement be waived for this promotional process only.

Commissioner Goddard asked if we would waive it altogether or would we just delay it and then do it later. Chief Eddingfield said we would delay it and we could catch them up within the next year. Commissioner Goddard asked if the state sets the timing for this course. Chief Eddingfield said no, that since our PDM was just approved by Merit this March, we haven't had the time to put the class on ourselves due to conducting two recruit classes this year.

Commissioner Goddard asked when the class could be held and Chief Eddingfield said it would be next year before we could put the class on. Chief Mitchell suggested including language in the variance that reflects that the applicants must take the Driver Operator Aerial Certification class within one year of promotion.

Commissioner Renner made a motion to approve the 2023 NFD Engineer Process as presented along with a variance that the Driver Operator Aerial Certification class must be taken within one year of promotion.

Commissioner Martz seconded the motion.

**VOTE TO APPROVE THE MOTION**

Commissioner Goddard	Aye
Commissioner Martz	Aye
Commissioner Renner	Aye

The motion passed.

Agenda Item 2: Merit Commission to consider approval of the 2024 Lateral Hiring Process (Chief Matt Mitchell)

Chief Mitchell said we had two hiring classes in 2023. One was a lateral class—six laterals were hired and four of them went through a lateral recruit academy. The other two lateral hires have joined 18 traditional hires in the currently running traditional recruit academy. He said we needed to hire 27 individuals and we only were able to hire 25. We will have budgetary authority in 2024 to hire for one new position plus for upcoming retirements. This means that in April 2024, we will be down eight positions. Because of this, we would like to have another lateral hiring process sometime in 2024 to fill those vacancies. Chief Mitchell distributed copies of Section VII – Lateral Hire Requirements to the Merit Commission. He said we do not intend to do anything differently this time than we did for the first Lateral Hiring Process. We are asking permission to hold another Lateral Hiring Process. He said the Merit rule does say that the Lateral Hiring List is good for one year and that there is an option to extend it for six months. However, we exhausted the 2023 Lateral Hiring Process List, so there is no longer a list that exists, so this would be a new process.

Chief Mitchell said we would like to run a longer recruitment period for the 2024 Lateral Hiring Process than what we ran for the 2023 Lateral Hiring Process in order to capture more applicants. He said the advantage to lateral hiring is that they can be trained in about four weeks as opposed to 18 weeks.

Chief Mitchell said we will still utilize the Traditional Hiring List that is still active, but there are only 20 names left on it. Past experience has shown that we only get one recruit for every eight or nine applicants, so the current hiring list will not last very long. A Lateral Hiring Process would best fit our current need to get replacements hired and trained in a shorter timeframe. The Training Division has done four recruit academies in three years.

Chief Mitchell said we would develop a lateral hiring list and bring to Merit Commission for approval.

Commissioner Renner asked if his memory was correct that the last lateral hiring process time crunch had to do with the SAFER grant. Chief Mitchell said we didn't know if we could get all of the SAFER grant hires using just the traditional hiring list and that in fact, we didn't get all of them using both processes. We did hire six applicants from the 2023 Lateral Hiring Process list.

Commissioner Goddard asked how many lateral applicants were on the 2023 Lateral Hiring Process list and Chief Mitchell said there were twelve.

Chief Mitchell said we will begin to advertise this year for the next Lateral Hiring Process, but we don't intend at this point to make hires until April 2024.

Commissioner Martz made a motion to approve the 2024 Lateral Hiring Process as presented.

Commissioner Renner seconded the motion.

**VOTE TO APPROVE THE MOTION**

Commissioner Goddard	Aye
Commissioner Martz	Aye
Commissioner Renner	Aye

The motion passed.

Commissioner Renner made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Martz seconded the motion.

**VOTE TO ADJOURN MEETING**

Commissioner Goddard	Aye
Commissioner Martz	Aye
Commissioner Renner	Aye

The meeting was adjourned.