

**NORTH RIDGEVILLE CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF  
REGULAR MEETING FEBRUARY 21, 2017**

**To Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M.

**Roll Call:** Present were Members Nick Ciofani, Dan Zezena and Chairman James Yost. Also present were Assistant Law Director Toni Morgan, Recording Secretary Donna Tjotjos and Fire Lieutenant Stephen Cook.

**Minutes:**  
It was moved by Ciofani and seconded by Zezena to approve January 17, 2017 meeting minutes as presented.  
MOTION CARRIED

**Election of Officers:**

Member Zezena nominated James Yost as Chairman and Ciofani seconded the nomination.

NOMINATION WAS APPROVED

Member Zezena nominated Nick Ciofani as Co-Chairman and Yost seconded the nomination.

NOMINATION WAS APPROVED

Member Ciofani nominated Dan Zezena as Secretary and Yost seconded the nomination.

NOMINATION WAS APPROVED

**Reports:**

Civil Service Calendar was noted

Member Zezena indicated that he would be unavailable Monday, April 24 to help with checking in candidates to the written patrolman exam. Member Ciofani indicated that he would be unavailable both April 22 and April 24 to help check in candidates for the agility patrolman exam and written patrolman exam. Chairman Yost indicated he would make himself available and asked to be sent a reminder as the date approaches.

Response to the Fire Captain and Assistant Fire Chief Promotional Exam was noted

Report on the use of certified mail was noted

A reminder that the Promotional Exams were held today, February 21, 2017

Deputy Clerk Tjotjos noted that there is no action required on the reports tonight by Civil Service.

Member Ciofani stated he has never heard that confirmation is 27 days on certified mail.

Deputy Clerk Tjotjos stated that Civil Service could really get hung up if that process is done again.

**Unfinished Business:**

Chairman Yost noted the request to reconsider the memorandum received from Toni Morgan regarding temporary appointments.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked for direction on whether or not Civil Service would like her to draft rules for the Commission to look at and consider the changes. There are two sections that talk about temporary appointments, section 6 and section 8. She stated that there is nothing that reflects the verbiage in the ORC related to section 8. This is an appointment not done by merit, so it is not Civil Service. Her suggestion is to make section 6 look more like ORC and to eliminate section 8. There is nothing she finds in case law or ORC.

Chairman Yost stated yes. There is a lot of extra verbiage in there and agreed that it needs to be amended.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated she will provide the amendments for the next meeting and it will be drafted in final form for the Commission to review.

**New Business:**

Chairman Yost noted the proposed rule amendments to Rule VI and Rule V, Section 1 and stated that the Law Department has explained the necessity in amending these rules and asked for a motion to approve those changes.

Assistant Law Director Morgan added that the Law Department received a letter from the Department of Justice questioning what has been done and she looked into the ORC. These two areas in bold would bring you into conformity with the ORC.

It was moved by Yost and seconded by Ciofani to approve the proposed changes to the Rules and Regulations

**MOTION CARRIED**

Chairman Yost addressed Fire Lieutenant Stephen Cook and asked if he would like to address the Commission.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated he was looking for clarification as far as the Civil Service exams and more specifically in terms of extra credit. He provided an example of when an anniversary date would fall within the testing period. He asked if Civil Service determines the extra credit before the test is announced or when it is certified or somewhere in between.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked which extra credit he was referring to.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated seniority.

Deputy Clerk added that the only extra credit promotional examinations receive is seniority credit.

Member Zezena asked what the rules state.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked if that was his only question.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated no.

Assistant Law Director Morgan suggested that she receive all his questions and she will get him written answers at the next meeting.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated that the answer isn't in the Rules and Regulations. The other question he had was as far as application of extra credit. He understood that Civil Service adopted the ORC rule section 124.45, which also reads and he pointed out, hasn't been done before; half points will be given for half a year. For the first four years the candidate gets one point per year and then .6 for the next ten years, equaling ten points. It reads in that section that credit shall be given for a half year of .3 and he asked if Civil Service would be honoring that as well.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated she would get back to him on that but the short answer to that one is yes.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated he spoke with Donna in January and it was suggested that if he had feedback on the examination then Civil Service Commission would welcome that since this is the first year in using the agency chosen. He proceeded to state that it was different and obviously, the City has worked with Clancy for a long time. He felt that the test was challenging and hopes that it creates some separation because in years past, the exams were pretty easy. Unfortunately, the questions weren't on specific topics. They were within topics and were literally sentences out of the section and you had to know verbatim what the

author had said. He didn't have a problem with that and he believes he did ok on it, but he would have liked to see something, for example there were three tactic books. Not a lot of it was on tactics. It was just basically your knowledge or what you could remember from that book. He noted that the candidates were given six pieces of materials to learn in 30 days and normally, he doesn't have a problem with that, but felt that the 30 day period was a missed opportunity to make them better at what they do as officers. It would have given them an opportunity to not just memorize the material but learn it and own it.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked if he was saying that the number of materials was too much or the days were too short.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated one or the other. There was six pieces of materials and one of the books was 600 plus pages and the rest averaged 300 pages with the exception of our local materials.

Member Zezena asked how long he has been a firefighter.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated he has been here 13 years.

Member Zezena asked what he hears when he talks to other guys in other departments.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated that it depends because they have switched agencies too and sometimes they have to give a test in a hurry.

Member Zezena asked if it was comparable to what we do or are we asking too much or too little.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated that they had well over 2,500 pages to learn and had to recite in 30 days. Within that 30 days, they have ten shifts for 24 hours and so that leaves them with four 20 shifts, 20 days to learn that material.

Member Zezena asked if the material was comparable to the job and stuff that they should know already or is it verbatim out of a book.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated the books themselves are good. Buildings don't change and obviously we don't have high rises or anything like that and so the tactics with those are different and the closest we have in terms of that is North Olmsted. They apply to the job and it is good stuff. He really wished they had more time to soak it in.

Member Zezena asked what the standards are across the board and if we were equal.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated he didn't feel that it be an equal kind of thing. He believes that

it is a missed opportunity to learn the material. He understood that Civil Service Commission knew the book list in December and they were told in January that there is a test in 30 days and here is the material list to study. Do the best you can.

Chairman Yost stated he understands that they have to take the test based on that information but hopefully, you won't stop learning from here on. Hopefully, you have learned what they are looking for and what they expect. He apologized that it gave them such a short time for the test itself.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated he was just providing feedback.

Member Zezena explained he is a paramedic and if he has to take a test, the information in that book, a lot of it he should probably already know.

Fire Lieutenant Cook explained that three of the books were tactics which made it a little more difficult in terms of no two fires are alike. It was hard to keep all of that tactical information straight regarding who said what and when. He provided an example of a question on the test asking for a fire flow in terms of how many gallons of water to put out a room this size, well, three different authors gave three different ways to do the math.

Chairman Yost asked if there was only one answer.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated yes, there was only one answer and fortunately, he was able to remember that one author used a certain formula and he used that.

Assistant Law Director Morgan asked if the test told you which one they were looking for in terms of what author.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated yes, they did break it down like that. The point he is making is that it would be nice to take the time to learn the information because they only have so many opportunities to take the time to learn this kind of stuff. There is training that they receive.

Member Zezena asked if they didn't still have time to go back and learn.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated absolutely, but would they hit it as hard, probably not. The point he is making is that it seems a missed opportunity to do it and with that, once the test is announced, everyone goes online and then it is three to five days to get the books.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that she can look into whether it is bound to the ORC or whether the Commission can change the rules as far as timing and it is certainly worth looking into.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated that the rules state minimum 30 days.

Chairman Yost stated that they are being tested against their peers and everyone is on the same page or the same condition.

Fire Lieutenant Cook agreed that they are but he just sees it as a missed opportunity.

Chairman Yost stated it would be more helpful and he does understand that.

Fire Lieutenant Cook restated that it would give the individual time to learn instead of memorizing and regurgitate. He stated that they can pick up tidbits here and there but within that timeframe, you end up cramming and not learning. It is fair and consistent for everyone, but he sees it as a missed opportunity to be able to learn.

Chairman Yost stated that it can be looked into to see if they can give a little bit more time to study.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated that it isn't anything that they haven't been through before. Clancy was cake compared to this test.

Chairman Yost stated that you probably knew their test seeing as though they may have been the same year to year.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated that he wouldn't say that they knew it but he did state that they were kind of soft-ball questions. He credited them by stating that they did deal with the topics. It wasn't just a sentence plucked out of a section such as did the author say this and oh, by the way the sentence below it asks is this sentence true as well. You had two statements and you had to say whether they were true or false. He explained the true and false type of questions along with the multiple questions where they gave you a list of four or five to choose from.

Member Zezena asked if he felt the test was good compared to Clancy.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated it was a challenge. He enjoyed it and hopes that it creates separation.

Member Zezena referred to the statement of the test questions being soft-ball and he would rather have someone who is a leader to be able to study and get the harder question. The national test questions are validated and he explained the process. He stated that some of the questions that are probably verbatim out of the book, but there are probably some other ones through that process that are not.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated that he knows exactly how they did it and explained what he believed their process is in working the tests. He didn't have a problem with the testing and he stated he didn't know what to expect, but he is okay with it. If there is another go around, he will know how to study a little differently.

Member Zezena asked if the assessment center has taken place.

Chairman Yost stated no. It will begin after the tests have been scored.

Member Zezena addressed Fire Lieutenant Cook and asked for his feedback on that as well.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated he already has preconceived notions.

Member Zezena stated he would still like to have his feedback on that. He asked him if he had anything else to add. He explained that the Assistant Law Director will look into his questions and thanked him for his time.

Fire Lieutenant Cook stated he hoped it was helpful.

Chairman Yost stated that except for what Dan has gone through, we are laymen here ourselves and in a way they should know every word in the Ohio Revised Code and Rules and Regulations and there is no way possible.

Member Zezena welcomed him back to hear his feedback regarding PRADCO.

Member Ciofani explained that this is his first year on this Commission and so, this is the first time he has gone through it and appreciates the feedback.

Fire Lieutenant Cook asked if the answer was yes on receiving the half credit on seniority.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated yes, but it is not official until she provides it in writing as it has to pass through her boss. She stated she will look into both seniority points and the study period of longer than 30 days.

Chairman Yost stated there is nothing else on the docket.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that there isn't but there is one more thing she wanted to bring to the Commission's attention. It has been as far back as Donna can locate that the passing grade on the test must be 70%. It doesn't appear anywhere in the rules.

Chairman Yost asked if she was referring to the written exam.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated it doesn't appear anywhere in the rules that it must be 70%. She stated that the Commission has adopted that and it has always been in the letters that we send out, but it isn't in the rules.

Chairman Yost stated he remembers having conversations about it.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that she has looked through the rules and it just doesn't say that. She is proposing that we adopt a rule to add to it.

Deputy Clerk Tjotjos stated that the only place the Commission has accepted it is when the Commission has approved the invitation letter. In the invitation letter it does explain that the grade to pass is 70%. That is the only place the Commission has approved the passing grade. However, it doesn't say anywhere in the rules that the passing grade is 70%.

Chairman Yost requested the Assistant Law Director to check that out as to whether or not that has to be in the Rules and Regs and Ohio Revised Code.

Deputy Clerk Tjotjos stated that the Ohio Revised Codes states that it is determined by the Civil Service Commission.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that it is the Commission's prerogative and it always has been 70%, but for some reason it never ended up in the rules. It is officially in the letters you send out, but it has never been in the rules. She suggests that it be added to the rules because it may affect the score, however not in this test because the scores were spread out, but 70% of 125 question test is 87.5. You can't have a half question as there is no half credit. It is either right or wrong. In addition to the rules stating 70% it should state that any fraction should be rounded up. No rounding down. If you rounded down, then the passing score would need to be less than 70%. It would state something like 70% rounded to the next highest number if there is a fraction. She felt that it should be officially in the rules and right now, because it won't affect any of the scores from this test, it should be reviewed and considered.

Member Zezena asked if there could be a .3 or .4.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated that it will probably be a .5 and you would round it up. If you rounded it down to 87 that would be below the 70%. That is her suggestion, but she feels that should be in writing.

Chairman Yost stated that it is strange that it has been so long without it in the Rules.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated she will bring the verbiage back to the Commission



for their ruling.

Member Ciofani noted receipt of the SPBR Conference in 2017 and asked what type of conference it was.

Deputy Clerk Tjotjos explained that every year the State Personnel Review Board will put on conferences that not only involve Civil Service topics but human resource topics as well. These are always open to Civil Service Members to attend as well as the Assistant Law Director. She noted that she has attended a few and stated they have always given great information for Civil Service members to learn from.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated she would like to attend.

Deputy Clerk Tjotjos mentioned during one of her network lunches with Civil Service Commission Clerks, the topic of certifying payroll was addressed and one municipality took that out of their Rules and Regs because it is not a requirement for Civil Service Commission to certify payroll. Ohio Revised Code or local codified ordinances do not require Civil Service Commission to certify payroll. The only place that is located as a responsibility is within the Rules and Regulations.

Assistant Law Director Morgan stated she would look into that.

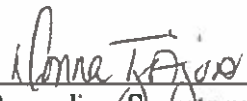
Chairman Yost stated that there is no further business.


It was moved by Zezena and seconded by Yost to adjourn.  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:02 P.M.

  
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Chairman

  
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Recording Secretary

  
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Date Approved