

A meeting of the Towanda Borough Police Civil Service Commission was held on February 7, 2022 in the Council Room of the Municipal Building located at 724 Main St, Towanda PA. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Commission Chairperson Alec Garden.

Roll Call

Present when the meeting was called to order were Commissioners Alec Garden, Mark Henery, Ryan Eberlin; and Chief of Police Randy Epler

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2020 meeting with the addition of terms of office up for renewal as follows: Mr. Garden – 2026, Mr. Eberlin – 2024, and Mr. Henery – 2028 was made by Mr. Henery. Mr. Eberlin seconded the motion. Motion carried to approve the minutes.

Old Business

General discussion on the purpose of civil service. Chief Epler stated he is not looking to hire anyone full-time at this time, everything is still viable for rules to hire. Discussion followed on the hiring and grievance process. Mr. Garden asked Chief Epler how many full-time officers there are on the force; Chief Epler answered 6 full-time which includes himself. Chief Epler is civil service but he is not in the union because he is administrative.

Chief Epler stated he is in a three-year window to retire; Officer Ryan Edsell is considering to run for Magistrate in the Wysox office as current Magistrate Wheaton is retiring; Officer Bryan Bellows has been on the force almost eleven years, twelve years to be vested and then he may pursue something different. Chief Epler stated Officer Edsell will not make twelve years of vested service should he run and win the Magistrate position.

Mr. Garden asked Chief Epler for the names of the current part-time officers: Officers Mike Lamanna, Derek Campbell, Garrett Smith, Thomas Roberts, Briar Jenkins (also full-time with Troy Police Department), Don Stringham, and Detective Al Ogden. Chief Epler said Officer Briar Jenkins would look to civil service test. Military counts as civil service time.

Mr. Eberlin asked Chief Epler to keep Civil Service Commission of any turn over on the force.

New Business

No new business.

Next Meeting

The Commission shall meet in February of the next even year or as needed.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m. on a motion made by Mr. Garden and seconded by Mr. Eberlin. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully,

Laurie L. McGuire

Laurie L. McGuire
Recording Secretary

A meeting of the Towanda Borough Police Civil Service Commission was held on August 31, 2022 in the Council Room of the Municipal Building located at 724 Main St, Towanda PA. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Commission Chairperson Alec Garden.

Present when the meeting was called to order were Commissioners Alec Garden, Mark Henery, Ryan Eberlin; and Chief of Police Randy Epler

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2022 as presented was made by Mr. Eberlin, seconded by Mr. Garden. Motion passed.

Old Business

No old business

New Business

➤ Initial Procedures For The Appointment Of An Individual To Fill A Patrol Officer Position

Mr. Garden stated the purpose of the meeting is to get people on a list for hiring with the Police Department; however, it is his understanding in a discussion with Council President Mark Christini the Borough has not budgeted for a position yet. Mr. Eberlin and Chief Epler added there is some potential turn over.

Chief Epler requests a modification to the advertisement when it goes out for publication that it is for the purpose of testing to establish a hire list as opposed to testing for a full-time position because there currently is not an open spot; the Borough Council actually has to create another spot. Chief Epler stated it was actually Council that brought it to him to add a seventh position. Councilman Mr. Eberlin added that has been robust conversation about it in Council of the need to add a position to address safety issues overnight, additional coverage at night, and more training with enough people to cover shifts; it will be looked at it in October when the budget review begins.

Chief Epler stated if a list is created of viable applicants, the certification list is good for two years after they test. Chief Epler referred to the Rules and Regulations to clarify. Mr. Eberlin referenced the Rules and Regulations – “Applications for a patrol officer position in the Police Department shall remain valid as an application for a patrol officer position for a period of two (2) years from the time the application is received and accepted.”

Mr. Henery asked is the two years from the time the application is received and accepted by the Commission or by the Council? Chief Epler answered it would make more sense that it be from the date the acceptance of applications is closed so that everyone who applied would start and stop at the same time so the person who first applied within the two or three weeks of accepting applications would not terminate from the list sooner than the one who applies last.

Discussion on the length of time to run an advertisement; where to advertise; the timeframe to keep the application acceptance open; and the ordering of written tests. It was suggested by Chief Epler to keep the application acceptance open for two weeks. Motion made by Mr. Eberlin to advertise in the Morning Times, Scranton Times, The Daily Review, Mansfield/Wellsboro Gazette, and the Williamsport Sun Gazette, and online with Indeed (Mr. Eberlin to handle) from September 12, 2022 to September 30, 2022; motion seconded by Mr. Henery; all in favor. Motion passed.

Ms. McGuire will email the Commission prior ads and the verbiage will be updated by Mr. Eberlin to specify that this ad is for the creation of a list and not for an actual position.

➤ Appoint Individuals to Conduct the Following Examinations and Tests

Chief Epler suggested the Commission appoint individuals now to conduct and score the tests. Discussion followed on individuals within the School District that could be asked to conduct the Written Examination and Oral Examination.

Chief Epler can set up a room at the school for the Written Exam; Mr. Eberlin will reach out to the physical education department for the Physical Agility Test and he will give them the requirements; Mr. Henery will set up people to administer the Written Examination; Mr. Garden will make arrangements for the use of the pool. Chief Epler has usually done the Oral Examination along with Lou Altieri, former PA State Police Sergeant. Chief Epler stated he and Sergeant Lantz can do the Consumer Report because they have access to criminal background history.

Ms. McGuire will check on the ordering of the tests from the same company used in the past and will order the appropriate number after the application acceptance closes.

Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Mr. Garden to adjourn the meeting at 5:55 p.m., seconded by Mr. Henery. Motion passed and meeting adjourned.

Respectfully,

Laurie L. McGuire

Laurie L. McGuire, Recording Secretary

A meeting of the Towanda Borough Police Civil Service Commission was held on December 7, 2022 in the Council Room of the Municipal Building located at 724 Main St, Towanda PA. The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Commission Chairperson Alec Garden.

Present were Commissioners Alec Garden, Mark Henery, Ryan Eberlin; and Chief of Police Randy Epler. No Visitors in attendance.

Minutes

The minutes of the August 31, 2022 meeting were approved upon a motion by Mr. Eberlin, seconded by Mr. Henery, all in favor. Motion passed to approve the minutes as presented.

New Business

➤ Physical Agility Test

Chief Epler reported part of the Physical Agility test has been scheduled for December 17, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.; there is too much to the test to do it all in one day. The exception would be if the candidates asked to waive it because they are all there and are feeling okay to continue with the full testing in one day. However, Chief Epler feels if they failed they could challenge the test and it wouldn't count and would have to be completed another day.

Mr. Eberlin stated he has reached out to Keith Brown at the high school; he is lifeguard certified and teaches lifeguard classes. Chief Epler took Mr. Brown's phone contact information from Mr. Eberlin and will call him. Mr. Eberlin stated if Mr. Brown should not be available, he will know who would be next on deck.

➤ Oral Examination

Mr. Eberlin asked if the Oral Examination is next. Chief Epler stated it is and they should begin scheduling it now. Discussion followed the rules and regulations state there will be five oral examiners; the Commission should start looking for those persons now. Chief Epler stated he is typically one; in the past they have always used Lou Alteri, a retired Sergeant with the Pennsylvania State Police; one local teacher; and one or two other people in good standing in the community from different disciplines that are somewhat near the law enforcement profession but still a civilian. Chief Epler suggests not loading the examiner board real heavy with cop related occupations and broaden the base out.

Chief Epler stated he has questions that are asked during an oral exam; he usually shares them in advance with the examiners beforehand and asks them to either pick a question or develop one of their own as long as the Commission approves them. Generally, each examiner gets to ask one question of each candidate; the candidate is dismissed from the room; the examiners score the candidate followed by a discussion of the examination board before the next candidate is called in. This process helps to balance out the scoring and eliminate wide sweeps in the grading; it also helps the examiners to feel how the candidates answer the questions presented.

Mr. Eberlin stated it will be the Commission's job to assemble the examiners. Chief Epler will take suggestions from the Commission of possible oral examiners; he will not reach out to them until after the holidays. Mr. Garden suggested maybe a sixth examiner as an alternate in case someone cannot make it on the scheduled exam date.

Discussion followed on possible examiners. Chief Epler could easily find someone in law enforcement. Mr. Garden asked if the examiners have to live in Towanda Borough; Chief Epler answered no, however, in the past they typically tried to use Borough residents. Chief Epler stated Lorie Kapson was used in the past from the teaching profession; Jim Bowen has been used in the past and is actually now the Deputy Coroner and also lives in the Borough. Mr. Henery suggested Tim Geiger as a possible examiner. Mr. Henery will explore the teacher end and advise.

Old Business

➤ Written Examination

The National Police Officer Selection Test was administered on December 3, 2022 with Mrs. Jene Conklin of the Towanda Area School District as the Proctor/Administrator. Chief Epler was present during the testing; he explained the exam took around 1 ½ hours broken down into four segments, averaging about 20 minutes per section. The three applicants, Derek Campbell, Garret M. Smith, and Briar Jenkins all passed. Mr. Eberlin clarified the section scores don't matter; it is the overall score that matters; Chief Epler stated that is what has been determined as at one time it did not read that way in the regulations. After long discussions and review of the regulations, the passing of each individual section of was dumped.

Since the written examination, Chief Epler notified each individual applicant of his personal score only. Officer Campbell is military of the group; upon completion of the physical fitness he will receive 10 additional points.

➤ Other Discussion

Chief Epler suggests after completion of this hiring and the whole process is fresh in the minds of the Commission Board, they go back through the Rules and Regulations and modify to something more current and simpler for everyone to understand

Mr. Garden stated a recent newspaper article indicated the Borough Manager wants another officer on the squad. Chief Epler answered it is his understanding Council is intending to hire this person after all the testing is completed to bring them on board in mid-May. Mr. Eberlin agreed this is in the budget for mid-year. Mr. Eberlin asked if you can use the same applicants to fill another position should it open up. Chief Epler answered yes up to a year the applications stay active.

The Commission will meet again after all testing is complete. With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned by Mr. Garden at 5:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurie L. McGuire

Laurie L. McGuire
Recording Secretary