

October 15, 2015 - Minutes

The City Diversity Board met in the Penn Room at 3:00pm on this date. Taking minutes was Nicole Thompson.

The Agenda below was distributed to the Board.

Present and representing were:

Felix Freytiz
Carole Snyder
Kimberly Talbot
Wynton Butler

Absent:

Carissa Johnson

Guests:

Thomas Coleman
Chief William Stoudt
Nicole Thompson
Chief Hart
Chief Heim

AGENDA

1. Welcome
 - Approval of minutes
 - i. 7/16/15
2. Department of Fire and Rescue Services
 - Civil Service testing update
 - i. Written test was 9/19/15
3. Board Composition
 - Chair/Vice Chair/Secretary
 - i. Held for full complement
 - ii. Ordinance update status
4. Develop Board Mission Statement and Goals
 - Review drafted bylaws and update
5. Meeting Schedule for 2016
 - Third Thursday, first month of each quarter

- 1/21, 4/21, 7/21, 10/20
- 3:00 PM
- Penn Room

6. Other Matters

7. Adjourn

Mr. Freytiz made a motion to approve the July meeting minutes.

Ms. Snyder seconded his motion. All were in favor.

Chief Hart provided an update on Fire Civil Service testing. Of the 60 moving forward, 8 are minorities, 3 female, 34 veterans, 2 City residents. The physical agility test will be the first week in November and practice sessions will be available before.

Ms. Snyder said that the ordinance reducing the number of unexcused absences that could cause removal from the board from three to two was passed by council, and the PSLC position was replaced with requiring a member of a comparable Hispanic or Latino organization.

Ms. Talbot volunteered to reach out to Mike Toledo and the NAACP to see if there is any interest in sitting on the City's Diversity Board.

Ms. Snyder said Council would be reorganizing in January and they may appoint someone else to the board.

Ms. Snyder reviewed the history and purpose of the group. She said a mission statement was drafted which aims to increase the diversity of the City's workforce and retain minorities. The purpose of the group is to advise the Mayor and HR how to accomplish that mission.

Mr. Butler added that the Diversity Board should also help the City get involved in events that can get residents exposed to City work.

Ms. Snyder said that is part of recruitment. Each department- Fire Department, Police Department and HR recruit workforce.

Chief Hart said he receives information on job fairs, but he finds out about them too late.

Ms. Talbot said she receives information on them all the time and can send them to Chief Hart. She asked if having a criminal background disqualifies you from working for the Police or Fire Departments.

Chief Hart said Reading follows Third Class City Code and you will be disqualified from the Fire Department if you have a Class C Misdemeanor or higher. Civil Service may challenge the decision and it will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Ms. Snyder suggested that the mission should also focus on recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.

Ms. Talbot pointed out that the EEOC looks at practices, not just policies.

Chief Heim offered to draft language for the Board's mission.

Ms. Snyder said we can review the language at January's meeting and will hopefully be able to have a full complement of Board members at that time.

Chief Heim suggested recruiting at mostly minority colleges. He said Police used to recruit at colleges but stopped when there was a cut in manpower. He suggested attending college career fairs at Cheyney, Lincoln, or Temple University.

Ms. Talbot said she could send him the contact information for someone at Cheyney.

Next meeting: Thursday, January 21, 2016, 3:00 pm in the Penn Room.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nicole Thompson