

October 16, 2014- Minutes

The City Diversity Board met in the Council Chambers at 3:00pm on this date. Taking minutes was Gregory Smith.

The attached Agenda was distributed to the Board.

Present and representing were:

Carole Snyder
Gregory Smith
Felix Freytiz
Carissa Johnson
Wynton Butler
Kim Talbot
William Thompson

Absent:

Francis Acosta

Guests:

Thomas Coleman
Chief William Stoudt
Chief William Heim
Sgt. Major Thomas Wright
Mark Dietrich
ROTC Students

1. Welcome
 - Introduction of new AFSCME representative
2. Reading High School Representatives
 - RHS Marine Corps JROTC
 - CTC Public Safety Program
3. Unification of Diversity Boards
 - Add member from Police and Fire
 - Update on Police Diversity Board
4. Fire Department
 - Possible Civil Service Prep Course

5. Board Composition

- Chair/Vice Chair/ Secretary

6. Meeting Schedule for 2015

- Third Thursday, first month of each quarter
- 3:00PM
- January 15th-Location TBD

7. Adjourn

Mr. Butler stated that we are having difficulty getting City residents and suggested we should have the current groups here. He indicated Sgt. Major Wright has 600 kids in JROTC, the largest in country. He stated that we have students here that are interested in there Fire & Police career and also have Mr. Dietrich from the CTC Public Safety Program.

Sgt. Major Wright stated that we have several combat veterans and current workers here.

Mr. Butler replied one individual here has experience with silent drill team and one speaks 3 languages. He stated that they could bring value to the city.

Chief Heim stated that we have officers retiring and there will be a walk in test in January. He continued that we have an agility test and then an oral interview. Chief Heim indicated that Veterans and Spanish speakers receive extra points on the testing.

At this time, the board accepted questions from the students present.

Chief Heim stated that there is no fee for the initial test, then a small fee to proceed after that. He noted that we have great benefits and a paid Police academy. Chief Heim confirmed that one must be 21 to be a police officer.

Mrs. Snyder stated that we would be happy to make arrangements in advance of the next testing so it does not seem as daunting to candidates.

Mr. Dietrich asked if college is required.

Chief Heim answered that it is not and the requirement is a GED or HS equivalent.

Chief Stoudt stated that they are looking at testing for January or February. He requested that they keep an eye on the website.

He noted candidates must be at least 18. He outlined the steps of a written exam, followed by a physical and then interviews. Chief Stoudt noted that they probably would not be hiring next year, but likely in 2016. He further outlined the requirements of a HS Diploma or GED. Chief Stoudt noted there is a 5 month paid training academy in which employees must be Fire and EMS trained. He clarified that Paramedics must come in with that certificate. Chief Stoudt stated that a prep course is currently not in place, but it is being discussed with the Civil Service Board.

Mr. Butler stated that he would volunteer the High School to host that program if it were to come to fruition.

Mr. Dietrich stated that approximately 90% of his students are interested in Police and 10% in Fire. He indicated the problem we see is that our students have 3 years to fill after graduating before they can become police. He noted many move on to other places looking for work before they can start. Mr. Dietrich stated we have to find ways to keep them here. He further noted, it can be boring at times for students when he teaches. He said it could keep things more exciting to bring in Police and Fire to teach applicable skills. Mr. Dietrich noted another difficulty has been finding them places to shadow. He stated some other municipalities are great with allowing that, but a problem sets in with transportation sometimes. He said he would like to build a relationship with the city to create opportunities. He expressed concern of past issues with the union.

Chief Stoudt replied that we could work with the union to move this forward jointly.

Mr. Butler stated that he could make sure contact information was exchanged.

Mr. Thompson spoke of the current make-up of RFD and lack of diversity, but noted it was not because they aren't welcomed. He urged students present to consider the positions within the city to help bridge cultural divide.

Chief Stoudt spoke of his graduation from Reading High and coming up through the ranks to Chief.

A student asked a question regarding tattoo policies.

Chief Stoudt & Chief Heim indicated that neither department has regulations regarding tattoos.

Chief Heim reiterated he would be happy to attend the next meeting.

Mr. Smith spoke of adding Police & Fire representation to the board.

Chief Heim indicated the Police Diversity Board requested 2 members.

Mrs. Snyder indicated concern about potential future difficulty reaching a quorum.

Mr. Coleman suggested 1 regular voting member and 1 alternate.

Mr. Smith suggested the removal of PSLC position to be replaced with a representative of the community along with a non-voting representative of the community.

Mr. Butler made a motion.

Mrs. Snyder seconded.

Votes 7- yes 0- no

Mr. Smith stated that there is a hold on appointing positions until a full board complement is obtained.

Mrs. Snyder requested a calendar invite to be sent out for the next meeting.

Mr. Smith indicated that he would send the invitation.

Mr. Freytiz requested data on the visitor sign up sheet.

Mr. Smith stated that he would send out an electronic version of the sign-in sheet.

Mrs. Snyder gave a brief overview of Star Communities.

Chief Heim stated there were 14 new police hires this year, and of that, 5 were Latino.

Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Freytiz seconded.