



CITY COUNCIL

Nominations & Appointments Committee

Monday, June 20, 2016
Meeting Report

Attendance: S. Marmarou, J. Slifko, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz

Others Attending: S. Katzenmoyer

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm by Mr. Marmarou.

I. Interview

Michael Leifer (reappointment – Fire Civil Service Board)

Mr. Marmarou questioned why Mr. Leifer was interested in continuing on this Board. Mr. Leifer stated that he has been involved with fire and EMS since the 1970's. He stated that he continues to be active with Western Berks and that his business background is also helpful. He stated that diversity is needed in the Fire Department but that minorities are not coming forward to take advantage of this opportunity.

Mr. Marmarou noted the importance of continuing to work to diversify the Fire Department. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed the belief that they do not come forward because there is no family history of working for the Fire Department. She stated that progress is being made with the Police Department. Mr. Leifer agreed and expressed the belief that different ethnicities have different aspirations. He stated that efforts to diversify will continue but that testing standards need to remain.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if there were still volunteers. Mr. Leifer stated that there are none and expressed the belief that this is a loss to the Department. He stated that young people who are interested in firefighting want experience and the City Department is very active and could give that experience. He stated that he does agree with the strict volunteer training guidelines.

Mr. Marmarou questioned if there was friction in the past between the volunteers and the professionals. Mr. Leifer stated that there was some. He stated that professional is a state of

mind, not about earning money. He stated that volunteers could take advantage of the knowledge and wisdom of the professionals. He stated that if volunteers take the Civil Service exam it would be a great pool of new employees. He also suggested that having EMS training and level 1 firefighting as a prerequisite to take the exam would reduce training by 90 days and reduce training costs to the City. He stated that this has not been implemented because the Board's solicitor feels the City would be sued because not all have access to this training before they are hired. He stated that he also speaks with the Deputy Chiefs to determine what their future needs are.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that EMS training is routinely available. She questioned where one would get level 1 firefighting training. Mr. Leifer stated that it is offered at the fire training center and also by some suburban fire companies.

Mr. Slifko questioned if this training would be paid by the individual. Mr. Leifer stated that it would be. He stated that an equivalency could also be accepted such as a military corpsman. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that this would be the same as requiring a college degree for a position.

Mr. Marmarou stated that past volunteers got on the job training only.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that much has changed. She stated that adding the EMS component has also caused major change.

Mr. Leifer stated that having the prerequisite would increase the quality of new hires while reducing the cost of training. He stated that you would never consider hiring a lawyer that never went to law school. He stated that many jobs have prerequisites and expressed the belief that this would bring more qualified and committed individuals.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned how the City can get more people interested in firefighting. Mr. Leifer stated that 180 individuals took the last exam. He stated that many of those already had some training.

Mr. Marmarou stated that he responded to fires while he was a policeman and there is not much they can do to assist without the proper equipment. Mr. Leifer agreed and stated that the same can be said for EMS. He noted the need for EMS to be sure that the scene is safe before they begin rescue efforts. He stated that the City has an excellent Department.

Mr. Slifko stated that he has had great experiences with the City's EMTs. He stated that they do outstanding work. Mr. Leifer agreed and stated that the City is very fortunate to have a dedicated staff. He stated that Phil Dougherty will not be continuing to serve on this Board and that a replacement is needed.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the qualifications that Mr. Leifer would like to see Board members have. Mr. Leifer suggested that it be a Reading resident with fire and EMS knowledge and/or experience. He noted the need for the individual to understand the needs of Reading's Fire Department and also be able to administer the Civil Service process.

Mr. Slifko questioned when the Board meets. Mr. Leifer stated that it meets monthly. He stated that they work to keep the Civil Service list active and work on promotions. He noted the need for new command staff not to make changes immediately after promotion.

Mr. Leifer stated that Mr. Breneiser is a great asset to the Board.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee recommends the reappointment of Michael Leifer to the Fire Civil Service Board.

II. Water Authority

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that there are currently two vacancies. She stated that this will be discussed at a Committee of the Whole meeting before applicants move forward. She stated that she does not support Councilors being appointed as it is a conflict of interest. She noted the need to find good people.

III. Pending Applications

Mr. Slifko stated that he was approached by a businessman who had a bad experience when trying to work with the Redevelopment Authority. He noted the need to fill the vacancies on this authority with people who are open to new developers.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that she has also heard from developers who have had negative experiences with the Redevelopment Authority.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that there are two applicants pending for the Redevelopment Authority. She stated that she is following up with the Mayor's office on Mr. Campitelli. She stated that Ms. Ciarlone is also pending because of her background issues.

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that Mr. Jacobson is interested in serving on the Redevelopment Authority but that the Mayor recommended him for the Planning Commission. She stated that she is following up with the Mayor's office.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that the Redevelopment Authority be discussed when Mr. Waltman meets with the Mayor.

Mr. Slifko expressed the belief that the Redevelopment Authority made itself more powerful when it was split away from the Community Development Department. He stated that he agrees that this topic should be discussed between Mr. Waltman and the Mayor.

Ms. Katzenmoyer reviewed the rest of the pending applications memo.

IV. Other Matters

- Pagoda Security

Mr. Marmarou stated that when he visited the Pagoda this past weekend the Jeep Club was there and that they had their jeeps parked in the handicapped spaces.

There was discussion about security issues at the Pagoda.

The Nominations and Appointments Committee adjourned at 4:42 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Shelly Katzenmoyer, CMC
Deputy City Clerk