



Board of Police and Fire Commissioners Annual Report for Year 2020

A total of thirteen (13) meeting of the Police and Fire Commission were conducted during this year. During this year the commission made some large changes in operations and procedures.

The commission reviewed several law firms and made a choice to change the commission's legal counsel to the law firm of Ottosen, DiNolfo, Hasenbalg, Castaldo LTD for representation. This change was advised by the Illinois Association of Police and Fire Commissioners to align the commission with Illinois State statues. After this was completed, the commission took on the task of updating its Rules and Regulations in accordance to the State statues and guidelines. The new rules are now posted on the city's website.

The commission changed or more accurately "added to" the procedures in the vetting process of both police and firefighter candidates by hiring an outside independent investigation company, Edward R. Kirby & Associates to work in conjunction with Berwyn Police Detectives on the background and polygraph investigations of candidates. This affords the commission another level of background research, especially in the case of Paramedic / Firefighters backgrounds.

Another major change was the addition of two (2) members to the commission raising the number of commissioners from three (3) to five (5) and a board secretary. This change brings the commission more in line with other commissions in Illinois which vary from three (3) to as many as fifteen (15) while reflecting the diversity of the community. Now with five commissioners, the board is more diverse offering different perspectives. The Rules and Regulations of the commission were updated. This was posted on the City website for a ten (10) day viewing period for the public, published in the newspaper and has now been approved and adopted and available on the city's website.

As part of the new rules, the commission will hold an annual public meeting at the Berwyn Public Library on the Second Tuesday in February to conduct general business of the board and a review of the commission activates and schedule and then reports of this meeting to the City Council.

The commission secretary provided information and history to the City of Berwyn's Ad Hoc Diversity Committee. Information shared included data regarding the testing process and the make-up of candidates that have applied to the city's Police and Fire departments. Also explained was the hiring and promotional process and procedures of police and firefighters.

Board Education and Training:

Because of the COVID pandemic, the annual conference that is held twice a year (one down state and one in the northern portion of the state) was canceled. Due to the cancellation, the two new members of the commission have not yet received their commission member training in addition to the other members of the commission also waiting to receive their continuing education and training. The State's commission association (IFPCA) did have an on-line conference to at least present basic outlines of being a commissioner. IFPCA is planning a regular conference in the early spring of 2021 that our commissioners will attend.

Two members of the commission were enrolled in a conference "Police Recruitment and Retention Seminar" in Philadelphia. This is the premier event to gain tactical strategies geared to enable you to recruit and retain the best personnel in a highly competitive market, especially during uncertain



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times. However, once again, this conference was canceled due to COVID. This was the second time it has happened to this conference, but to their credit, they will have a virtual conference in late January that we are all (along with members of the police department command staff) are signed up for and will attend.

After serving on the Board of Police and Fire Commissioners for 51 years, Carl Reina has retired on December 27th 2020. Carl has served as the Board’s Chairman for over 25 years and the Board will miss his leadership and more so his stories of how the commission has gone through the many changes over the years. The Commission will be reorganizing sometime in late January 2021 after the new commissioner has taken the oath of office.

Fire Department:

The commission finalized the Fire department eligibility exam and posted the final list. This was an unusual year with the January 2020 list exhausted or expired, and a second eligibility exam and interviews had to be conducted and finalized in September of 2020. The total number of candidates tested and evaluated was sixty-two (62). The testing resulted in the hiring of seven (7) probationary Paramedic / Firefighters from both lists. From the Lieutenants eligibility list, two (2) Firefighters were promoted the rank.

There were no (0) Hearings, Charges for Discipline, Suspension or Discharge actions for the Commission from the Fire Department Chief.

Police Department:

The commission finalized the Police Department eligibility exam and posted the final list. There were a total of forty-one (41) candidates that were tested and evaluated. A total of twelve (12) probationary police candidates were hired this year. From the Sargent’s promotional list, a total of four (4) officers were promoted to the rank. From the Lieutenant’s list, two (2) Police Sargent’s were promoted to the rank.

The Commission started working on the process of “Lateral Hires” of certified police officers. This process is necessary for many reasons. There is only one (1) training academy open in the state due to COVID, and it is located in Southern Illinois. There are very limited seats available as everyone in the state is trying to get their police candidates trained for their municipalities. Due to retirements and a variety of reasons for officers leaving the Berwyn Police Department, the commission is unable to replace police officers in a timely manner resulting in reductions in staffing and an increase in overtime. The commission will begin this process early January of 2021.

There were no (0) Hearings or Charges for Discipline, Suspension or Discharge actions for the Commission from the Police Department Chief.

Board of Police and Fire Commissioners

Carl Reina, Chairman

Gilbert Pena, Commissioner

Ana Espinoza, Commissioner

Ken Waszak, Commissioner

Alice Solis, Commissioner

Tony J. Laureto, Secretary