TOWN OF SCHERERVILLE SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA

FIRE MERIT BOARD MEETING October 1st, 2026

The Fire Department Merit Board Regular Meeting was called to order by President Roger Florkiewicz at 5:31p.m., in the Schererville Town Hall Meeting Room, 10 E. Joliet Street, Schererville, IN.

Attendance was taken with the following Board Members present: President Roger Florkiewicz, Vice President Tim Arvanitis, Secretary Paul Petrie, Tom Fulk and David Turoci. Staff members present: Fire Chief Robert Patterson, Deputy Fire Chief David Meyer, and Acting Recording Secretary Jon Gettemans. Also present: Attorney Christian Bartholomew

THEREUPON, Approval of the Minutes

Paul Petrie made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2026 Regular Meeting, seconded by Tim Arvanitis. Motion Carries (5 – 0).

THEREUPON, Correspondence - None

THEREUPON, Old Business

ITEM A. Certify Eligibility Hiring List

Chief Patterson thanked Tom Fulk and President Florkiewicz for their part in the completion of the interview process. The eligibility hiring list was presented for approval and signatures to the Board to proceed with hiring. It was clarified by Attorney Bartholomew that approval of the list would also constitute certification to the Safety Board, which would receive a copy documenting the Board's official action.

Tom Fulk made the motion to approve the eligibility hire list and certify for the safety board, seconded by David Turoci. Motion carries (5-0).

Tom Fulk inquired whether candidates would be informed of their ranking on the eligibility list. It was confirmed that each candidate would be notified individually via email.

THEREUPON, New Business

ITEM A. Approval to hire one full time firefighter from list

A motion was made by Tim Arvanitis and seconded by Tom Fulk to approve the hiring of one full-time firefighter, specifically the highest-ranked qualified candidate from the newly approved eligibility list. Motion carries (5-0).

Discussion followed regarding the selection process. It was confirmed that eight candidates were initially scheduled for interviews, six were interviewed and all six remained on the eligibility list. President Florkiewicz inquired if their firefighter testing was verified with the state. Chief Patterson indicated that Captain Trevino had verified the candidates' qualifications prior to the interviews, including applicable state firefighter testing requirements. It was clarified that the highest-ranked candidate would be contacted to begin the hiring process and that the remaining candidates would stay on the eligibility list for two years.

ITEM B. Promotion from Lieutenant to Captain

Chief Patterson explained that a Captain's position became vacant approximately one year earlier following departmental promotions. At that time, no candidates met the qualifications for advancement to the position. Chief further explained that following the established promotional testing process, Ryan Abens was promoted to Lieutenant. When no qualified candidate is available for the Captain position, the Department has historically promoted an individual to Lieutenant, allowing sufficient time to obtain the required certifications, experience and qualifications before recommending advancement to Captain.

Attorney Bartholomew stated that under the Merit Board's rules and applicable state statute, all promotions resulting from vacancies in rank require Board approval. The rules also require maintaining a promotional eligibility list established through written and oral examinations, performance evaluations and length-of-service credit. Qualified candidates are ranked on the eligibility list, from which promotions are made as vacancies occur. Attorney Bartholomew further noted that while the Board has previously considered time-based advancements, it has not yet addressed a competitive promotion to fill a higher-ranking vacancy under the current Merit Board framework. He explained that promotional appointments require a probationary period not exceeding one year and that promotional eligibility lists remain valid for two years. Under the applicable statute, candidates must meet minimum rank and service requirements, complete competitive examinations and be placed on an eligibility list. Upon a vacancy, the three highest -ranking eligible candidates are certified to the Chief for consideration. Attorney Bartholomew did note

potential inconsistencies between the Department's historical promotional practices and the Merit Board's statutory requirements. He also recommended reviewing and updating the Lieutenant and Captain job descriptions to ensure consistency with the Merit Board process and suggested the Lieutenant's title include {Probationary Captain}in title.

Chief Patterson elaborated that the Lieutenant position has historically served as a transitional role toward Captain (like a probationary Captain), allowing employees to obtain the necessary qualifications and experience. The duties are substantially similar, with Captain's assuming additional responsibilities. He further explained that promoting the current Lieutenant to Captain would not create a need to fill the Lieutenant position unless another vacancy arose.

Discussion followed regarding the practicality of competitive testing for a position with only one eligible candidate. It was noted that the Department's size and organizational structure generally limit the number of eligible candidates, raising concerns about the efficiency of conducting a full competitive promotional process under these circumstances. It was also clarified that the existing Lieutenant eligibility list was established prior to the creation of the Merit Board, effective 12/18/24. The selection process included interviews and reviews of personnel records but no written examination. It was emphasized that the department now has procedures in place governing promotional testing and advancement under the Merit Board rules. Following the current transitional promotion, future promotions would be conducted in accordance with those established requirements.

Tom Fulk questioned whether the Schererville Firefighters Professional Union Local 4279 had any concerns regarding the proposed promotion and the process being followed. It was noted that union representatives were not present at the meeting. The process was described from Chief Patterson as consistent with procedures followed for previous promotions and no objections or concerns had been brought forward to the Chiefs.

Following discussions, a motion was made by David Turoci and seconded by Paul Petrie to approve the promotion of the Lieutenant to Captain. Motion Carries (5-0)

THEREUPON, Reports - None

THEREUPON, Board Members

Paul Petrie inquired about the procedure for filling Board positions scheduled to expire at the end of the year, including those held by Tom Fulk, Roger Florkiewicz and himself.

Attorney Bartholomew explained that the Board members are appointed by either the Town Council or the Fire Department and that reappointments would generally follow the same procedures as the original appointments. He noted that firefighter representatives are selected through a vote of the firefighters and the Town Council appointees are typically addressed toward the end of the year. It was discussed that the firefighter representative positions would need to be addressed sufficiently in advance to allow time to schedule a meeting with them. The matter would be discussed further at the next Board Meeting.

David Turoci expressed concern regarding the possibility of holding a study session to determine or revise job descriptions, stating that establishing job duties and descriptions falls outside the Board's responsibilities. In response, Chief Patterson explained that the proposed revisions would be prepared and then reviewed by Attorney Bartholomew to ensure consistency with the Merit Board rules and established promotional procedures. Once completed, the proposed revisions would be distributed to Board members in advance for review and comments before being presented for approval.

THEREUPON, Business from the Floor -None

THEREUPON, Adjournment

There being no further business, Tim Arvanitis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Roger Florkiewicz. Motion carries (5 – 0). The meeting was adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

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ROGER FLORKIEWICZ
SCHERERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
MERIT BOARD PRESIDENT
A TRUE COPY

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TIM ARVANITIS
SCHERERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
MERIT BOARD VICE PRESIDENT
A TRUE COPY