TOWN OF SCHERERVILLE SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA

FIRE MERIT BOARD MEETING October 2, 2025

The Fire Department Merit Board Regular Meeting was called to order by President Roger Florkiewicz at 5:37 p.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, David Turoci, and Tom Fulk. Staff members present: Fire Chief Robert Patterson, Deputy Fire Chief David Meyer, and Recording Secretary Jenn Chatel. Also present: Attorney Christian Bartholomew.

THEREUPON, Approval of the Minutes

Vice President Tim Arvanitis made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 4th, 2025 Regular Meeting, seconded by Mr. David Turoci. Motion Carries (5 – 0).

THEREUPON, Correspondence

ITEM A. Fire Department - NONE

THEREUPON, Old Business

ITEM A. FD – Update on Full Time Firefighter/EMT

Attorney Bartholomew stated that last month the Board met with Firefighter Jenkins regarding the pending disciplinary matter. Firefighter Jenkins had requested additional time to obtain legal counsel prior to scheduling a disciplinary hearing. He noted that no further updates have been received concerning Firefighter Jenkins's efforts to secure counsel. Attorney Bartholomew asked whether anyone present had any additional information regarding this – hearing none, he stated either himself or Chief Patterson would reach out to Firefighter Jenkins in order to work toward establishing a date for the disciplinary hearing. President Roger Florkiewicz noted that the Board had previously granted Firefighter Jenkins a 90-day extension and Attorney Bartholomew confirmed they remain within that timeframe. Mr. David Turoci inquired if Firefighter Jenkins is still employed at this time and if he is still working on his testing. Chief Patterson acknowledged he is still employed and Deputy Chief Meyer responded that testing is scheduled for October 7th.

ITEM B. FD- Update on Merit Board Rules

President Roger Florkiewicz inquired whether there were any updates regarding the proposed Merit Board rule change. Attorney Bartholomew responded that he is continuing to work on the revisions and noted that, as discussed earlier in the year, the goal is to begin updating the rules on an annual basis. He further stated he hopes to provide the Board with a proposed draft of changes, incorporating Attorney Austgen's recommendations as well as additional clarifications based on matters that have arisen since the last review. He expects to have the draft ready by the next meeting, which will allow the Board time to view and discuss and post notice for December or January to finalize any amendments.

THEREUPON, New Business

ITEM A. FD – Request approval to offer conditional offer of employment to the top candidate from the existing hiring list

Chief Patterson stated that he was seeking the Board's approval to hire a new full-time firefighter to fill a vacancy created by a recent resignation within the department. He explained there are two remaining candidates on the current certified hiring list. Having made multiple attempts to contact the first candidate, with no response to phone calls or emails; the Chief recommended moving forward with the next candidate on the list, Michael McNeal. Chief Patterson requested the Board's approval to extend a conditional offer of employment to that candidate, pending completion of all required testing and background checks. Attorney Bartholomew clarified that the hiring list being used is the previously established list certified by the Safety Board, and although the department may be near the end of its two-

year cycle, the list remains valid for use at this time. He noted that the department has effectively reached the end of this hiring list, and once this selection process is complete, future hires will be made from the next list established by the Merit Board.

Vice President Tim Arvanitis made the motion to offer conditional employment to Mike McNeal, seconded by Secretary Paul Petrie. Motion Carries (5-0)

ITEM B. FD – Request approval to start the process to create a new full-time hiring list

Chief Patterson explained that with the current hiring list now exhausted, the department seeks authorization from the Board to establish the next eligibility list and that the Merit Board will now be directly involved in this process. He stated it is a nationwide online application process where applicants complete the steps online including video answers to questions and testing. After the application window closes, two committee members and two pension board members grade their interview questions which will add to the grading score the system does automatically. This list would then go to the Merit Board for review and approval. Chief Patterson further explained that once the process is complete and the eligibility list has been approved, when a hiring vacancy occurs, the top candidates from the list will be brought in for in-person interviews, which will be conducted and graded by the same evaluators who administered the online assessments. Attorney Bartholomew added that the completed eligibility list will be submitted to the Safety Board for certification which serves as an additional step to formally validate the list, after which hiring can occur from that list as staffing needs arise. There being no further questions, a motion was requested to approve the process.

Mr. Dave Turoci made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Tom Fulk. Motion Carries (5-0)

THEREUPON, Reports – NONE

ITEM C. (Final October agenda had removed Item C)

Mr. Dave Turoci inquired if we were skipping item C. Deputy Chief Meyer confirmed that Item C was regarding a part time hire and confirmed it was removed and not on the latest agenda. Attorney Bartholomew further stated the interpretation is that only the full time employees are subject to promotions and disciplinary procedures and the part timers are not within merit board purview. Mr. Dave Turoci asked if the part time candidate was hired. Chief Patterson confirmed that approval was given at the Board Safety meeting for the part-time hire.

THEREUPON, Business from the Floor

Schererville Firefighters Union Local 4279 Secretary, Collin Zackavec, addressed the Board and extended an invitation to attend the fire department's open house Saturday (10/4) 11am-2pm at Station 2. He shared the event will feature a stove fire demo, car extrication demo, activities for the kids, and refreshments. He noted that most full-time personnel will be in attendance and that it is an excellent opportunity to meet the fire department members, tour the station and the trucks and stated he looked forward to seeing everyone at the event.

THEREUPON, Board Members

Mr. Tom Fulk brought up the meeting start time change from 6:00pm to 5:30pm and inquired if the Board would entertain going back to 6pm due to new family responsibilities including caring for a parent and grandchild and the 5:30 start time was difficult to manage. Board members expressed flexibility in adjusting the start time. Consensus was reached to move the regular meeting time to 5:45pm going forward.

Vice President Tim Arvanitis shared a recollection of a specific call for a house fire he went on with the Fire Department in the past. He spoke of the firefighters on the lawn struggling to breathe and seeing air tanks laying everywhere. He expressed collective pride and appreciation for the men and women of the Fire Department and emphasized that the community recognizes their hard work and sacrifices, and it's not said often enough, and thanked the department for their continued commitment to serving the public.

THEREUPON, Adjournment

There being no further business, Vice President Tim Arvanitis made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by David Turoci. Motion carries (5 – 0). The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

ROGER FLORKIEWICZ
SCHERERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
MERIT BOARD PRESIDENT
A TRUE COPY

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