TOWN OF SCHERERVILLE SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA

FIRE MERIT BOARD MEETING May 7, 2026

The Fire Department Merit Board Meeting was called to order by President Roger Florkiewicz at 5:35 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

Paul Petrie made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 2nd, 2026 meeting, seconded by Tom Fulk. Motion Carries (5 – 0).

THEREUPON, Correspondence - None

THEREUPON, Old Business

ITEM A. Approval of Amended Merit Board Rules

Attorney Bartholomew passed out the amended rules to Board Members and also to Collin Zackavec, Secretary for Schererville Firefighters Profession Union Local 4279. Attorney Bartholomew stipulated that the proposed Merit Board Rules incorporated all amendments previously discussed at prior meetings and circulated via email approximately three to four weeks earlier. Attorney Bartholomew further stated notice of the rules had been published in two separate publications and that this constituted the formal public hearing for approval of the amended rules. He explained the accompanying resolution memorialized that the original rules were adopted June 5, 2025 and that the current document reflected the proposed amendments.

Clarification was provided that all prior markups and revisions had been incorporated into the final draft and that no additional amendments had been made since the previous meeting. Attorney Bartholomew noted the addendum and performance rating exhibit remained substantially unchanged, except for updated references to the amended paragraph numbering.

Discussion followed regarding amendments made at the previous meeting, including the addition of ten bonus points for paramedic licensure and revisions to scoring requirements. It was clarified that applicants could achieve a passing average score of 70%, with one section score permitted as low as 50%, rather than requiring a minimum score of 70% in each individual section.

A roll call vote was conducted to approve the motion for approval of the amended Merit Board Rules. The Board voted as follows:

- Secretary Paul Petrie: “Aye”
- Vice President Tim Arvanitis: “Aye”
- President Roger Florkiewicz: “Aye”
- David Turoci: “Aye”
- Tom Fulk: “Aye”

Motion Carries (5-0)

After the vote, Attorney Bartholomew requested circulation of a single signature copy for Board Member signatures and delivery to the Recording Secretary. Attorney Bartholomew also noted a correction to the signature block, requesting the Recording Secretary print and sign her name for proper inclusion in the official record.

Attorney Bartholomew shared that the newly adopted rules would not become effective until 30 days after passage, following distribution to all firefighters as required by statute. He further stipulated that the Board must determine whether the current firefighter hiring process should proceed under the existing rules or be delayed until the new rules become effective. He reviewed the effect of the newly adopted rules on the ongoing firefighter hiring process and advised that applying the new rules before the expiration of the statutory 30-day notice period

could create legal and procedural concerns. Following discussion regarding bonus points, candidate rankings and hiring procedures, the consensus of the Board and Fire Chiefs was to continue the current hiring process under the existing rules to avoid delays and address staffing needs.

ITEM B. Update on Hiring Process

Chief Patterson reported that the online application and testing phase had concluded on May 6th at 8pm and that the process would move to recorded video interviews. He advised that Board Member Tom Fulk and Vice President Tim Arvanitis had agreed to assist in evaluating candidate responses through the online interview platform. Board members were informed that candidates would answer pre-recorded questions, and evaluators would score responses electronically and may provide notes regarding candidate performance.

Deputy Chief Meyer stated that approximately 18-19 applicants completed the assessment process, with an estimated 7-9 candidates meeting all the minimum qualifications. Discussion followed regarding applicant screening criteria and whether candidates who failed to meet minimum qualifications should advance in the process. Attorney Bartholomew advised that the initial video interview is part of the overall assessment process and requires a grade; however, the Board has the authority to determine which applicants have minimum qualifications and are qualified to advance, i.e., being a firefighter, being an EMT, having paramedic certification, etc.

Following discussion, a motion was made by Paul Petrie and seconded by Dave Turoci to deem applicants who do not meet the qualifications established in the Board's rules as unqualified and ineligible to advance to the in person interview phase. Motion Carries (5-0).

THEREUPON, New Business - None

THEREUPON, Reports - None

THEREUPON, Board Members

Vice President Arvanitis inquired whether the Town had considered alternative arrangements to expedite repairs of fire apparatus, such as utilizing an afternoon or weekend mechanic to reduce downtime when an engine/ambulance is out of service. He noted concerns regarding potential delays in service when vehicles remain out of operation over weekends or while awaiting repairs. Chief Patterson responded that the department has not pursued such arrangements and explained that operational needs are addressed through mutual aid agreements and the use of reserve apparatus. He stated that neighboring departments routinely assist one another when equipment becomes unavailable and noted that mechanics have been called in outside normal working hours when circumstances warranted immediate repairs.

Deputy Chief Meyer advised that the Department maintains a reserve engine and has been able to continue service without interruption if the primary apparatus is temporarily out of service.

THEREUPON, Business from the Floor – None

THEREUPON, Adjournment

There being no further business, David Turoci made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Paul Petrie. Motion carries (5 – 0). The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.

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ROGER FLORKIEWICZ
SCHERERVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT
MERIT BOARD PRESIDENT
A TRUE COPY

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