

TOWN OF SCHERERVILLE

SCHERERVILLE, INDIANA

FIRE MERIT BOARD MEETING

May 1, 2025

The Fire Department Merit Board Regular Meeting was called to order by President Roger Florkiewicz at 6:00 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 Interim Recording Secretary Jon Gettemans. Also present: Attorney Christian Bartholomew.

THEREUPON, Approval of the Minutes

Vice President Arvanitis made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 3, 2025 Regular Meeting, seconded by Secretary Petrie. Motion Carries (5 – 0).

THEREUPON, Correspondence

ITEM A. NONE

THEREUPON, Old Business

ITEM A. Update on full-time hiring

Chief Patterson informed the Board that the two candidates' full-time hiring paperwork is currently with the state for review from the doctor.

THEREUPON, New Business

ITEM A. Approval of Draft Merit Board Rules

President Florkiewicz advised that copies of the proposed merit board rules had been distributed to all Board Members and subsequently invited questions, comments, or any further discussion pertaining to the matter.

Attorney Bartholomew reported that he had distributed three separate documents for the Merit Board's review. Among them was a copy of the draft Merit Board rules containing highlighted revisions. He noted that the changes were intended to clarify and update specific language within the document.

Attorney Bartholomew began by addressing the first proposed revision, found in Section 4(b). He explained that the language in this section had been amended to clarify that the Merit Board does not possess authority over budgetary decisions or the number of open positions. Instead, such decisions are under the jurisdiction of the Town Council.

Attorney Bartholomew then referenced Section 6(d)(iii), which pertains to promotional procedures. He summarized a recent study session discussion regarding the role of performance records in promotion decisions. He informed the Merit Board that the weighting of promotion evaluation components had been adjusted as follows: 30% Written Examination, 20% Oral Interview, 40% Performance Record, and 10% Length of Service, bringing the total evaluation weight to 100%. In particular, the attorney noted that revisions to Section 6(d)(iii) were made to reflect the Merit Board's intent to emphasize the role of performance evaluations. The revised language now specifies that the score of a member's performance record shall be determined as follows: The average of the member's last four performance ratings (spanning the most recent two years) will be weighted at 80%, and the average of the member's four preceding performance ratings (prior to the last four) will be weighted at 20%. It was further clarified that only the portions of performance ratings containing numerical scores shall be used in this calculation. The attorney communicated that these revisions were made to ensure consistency with the Merit Board's expressed preferences and to provide transparency in the promotion scoring process.

President Florkiewicz voiced approval of the changes to the promotional process revision, specifically the revised performance rating scale. He noted that the modifications addressed the concerns he had after the last study session. Mr. Fulk raised a question regarding promotional processes occurring within the next year or within a timeframe where no performance evaluations have yet been conducted. He asked how the performance record score would be determined in such cases, given the absence of evaluative data. Discussion continued in light of Mr. Fulk's concerns. The Merit Board ultimately agreed, based on a proposal by Attorney Bartholomew, to include an amendment stating that in the event a promotional process occurs and the required four years or eight prior performance ratings are unavailable, a performance record score shall be formulated using any available performance evaluations accrued to date, along with a recommendation from the Fire Department, and shall be approved by the Merit Board on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration any numerical ratings that are available. Fire Chief Patterson reported that there is a current promotional list that was approved for two years from the date of approval of the previous promotional acceptance board, the Board of Safety. Attorney Bartholomew clarified that the current two year promotional list will remain valid per state statute.

Attorney Bartholomew further reported that Section 12(c) had been revised to include a new requirement that the Merit Board shall conduct a review of the rules, all forms, and evaluative criteria specified on an annual basis. Additionally, the attorney presented an addendum to the rules which contains more specific rubrics and scoring guidelines for evaluative components that are not explicitly detailed in the main body of the rules. He explained that this structure allows for future modifications to scoring criteria to be made through updates to the addendum rather than requiring formal amendments to the rules themselves.

With no further discussion, President Florkiewicz entertained a motion to the approval of the draft Merit Board rules. Vice President Arvanitis made a motion to approve the draft Merit Board rules as presented by Attorney Bartholomew, seconded by Mr. Fulk. Motion Carries (5 – 0).

ITEM B. Set Date for Public Hearing for Final Approval

Attorney Bartholomew advised that a copy of the preliminary approval draft will be distributed to the Town Council, Fire Chief, and Clerk-Treasurer, and that a date must be scheduled for a public meeting. At that meeting, public comment will be accepted, followed by a final vote for official adoption of the rules. Mr. Fulk made a motion to set the date for the public hearing for final approval on Thursday, June 5, 2025, seconded by Mr. Turoci. Motion Carries (5-0)

THEREUPON, Reports

ITEM A. Fire Department –

Chief Patterson informed the Board that Firefighter/EMT Aaron Anderson is retiring from the Schererville Fire Department after serving 27 years.

THEREUPON, Board Members

Vice President Arvanitis raised a question in regards to Chief Patterson's dealing with the Town Council budget review and how to add more firefighters. Chief Patterson informed Vice President Arvanitis that he is involved with the Town Council budget review and at this time, there is no funding for additional firefighters.

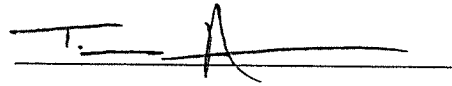
THEREUPON, Business from the Floor NONE

THEREUPON, Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Turoci made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Vice President Arvanitis. Motion carries (5 – 0). The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 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