

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF FIRE  
& POLICE COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF BELVIDERE  
HELD ON MARCH 23, 2023 IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
OF THE BELVIDERE CITY HALL**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Hunter called this Special Meeting of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners to Order at 6:10 PM.

**ROLL CALL:** Commissioners Hunter and Phillips were personally and physically present in the meeting room. Commissioner Gonzalez had officially retired from the Board, but a replacement had not yet been officially appointed and confirmed by the Mayor and the City Council. Commissioner Gonzalez was not physically present nor was he present by remote means. No Commissioner attended by electronic or remote methods. Police Chief Shane Woody were also personally present in person as was Detective Sergeant Smaha. Fire Chief Shawn Schadle was also physically present for this Meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** There was no Public Comment presented.

**READING OF THE MINUTES:** Previously, Secretary Phillips distributed the proposed Minutes of the Board's Special Meetings as held on February 28, 2023 and March 15, 2023. Commissioner Hunter made a verbal Motion To Approve As Presented the proposed Minutes of the Board's February 28, 2023 and March 15, 2023 Special Meetings. Commissioner Phillips verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call vote was held with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and the proposed Minutes were approved as presented.

**COMMUNICATIONS:**

A. *Bills Payable.*

1. C.O.P.S. and F.I.R.E. Personnel Services, Inc.'s Invoice #107986 and dated March 17, 2023 in the amount of \$ 2,550.00 for three Psychological Examinations as administered to Police Sergeant Promotional Candidates Delevan, Jones and Kaplan. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Approve As Presented this Invoice. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call vote was held with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and this Invoice was approved for Payment.

B. *Police Chief's Report.* Police Chief Shane Woody made the following verbal report that Probationary Police Officer Jonathan Hernandez is now in Week #11 at the Suburban Law Enforcement Academy and is progressing as expected and is anticipated to graduate on April 28, 2023.

C. *Fire Chief Report.* Fire Chief Shawn Schadle made the following verbal report:

(1) The Fire Chief stated that he reviewed the Board's current Rules and Regulations and there is no need for the Board to consent to the completion of Firefighter Corey Mitchell's probationary period; and

(2) Because of the imminent initiation of the new independent contractor medical transport program by the Fire Department (74 persons applied to be employed by the independent contractor who will operate the transport program for the Fire Department AFTER the Fire Department recommends the candidates for employment) the Fire Chief has not had an opportunity to consult with the Board's attorney concerning the matters referred by the Board at its last meeting.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** NONE.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Commissioner Phillips noted that there was only a few Fire Department Agenda Items and it was listed as last on tonight's Agenda and that the Police Action Items will probably take a much longer time to complete. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Amend the Agenda by Moving Agenda Items (G) through (J) before Agenda Item (A). Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Voice Vote was held and Chair Hunter ruled that the Motion had passed and that the Agenda was amended.

(G) *Fire – Review Firefighter Candidate Background Investigation Reports.*

Fire Chief Schadle then distributed the written Background Investigation Report for Firefighter Candidate Michael Mercado which the Board then reviewed. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Find that Firefighter Candidate Michael Mercado had NOT successfully completed the required Background Investigation Step as required by the Board's current Rules and Regulations and thus to remove Candidate Mercado's name from the Final Eligibility Register. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the name of Firefighter Candidate Michael Mercado shall be removed from the Final Eligibility Register.

Fire Chief Schadle then distributed the written Background Investigation Report for Firefighter Candidate Joshua Norek which the Board then reviewed. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Find that Firefighter Candidate Joshua Norek had NOT successfully completed the required Background Investigation Step as required by the Board's current Rules and Regulations and thus to

remove Candidate Norek's name from the Final Eligibility Register. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the name of Firefighter Candidate Joshua Norek shall be removed from the Final Eligibility Register.

*(H) Fire – Authorize Conducting Firefighter Candidate Background Investigations for the Remainder of the Candidates on the Final Eligibility Register.*

The Fire Chief noted that the names of only about six (6) Firefighter Candidates now remain on the Final Eligibility Register and asked the Board to initiate Background Investigations on all remaining Firefighter Candidates. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Authorize the Police Department to Conduct the required Background Investigations on all Candidates Remaining on the Firefighter Final Eligibility Register. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the Police Department is hereby authorized to begin the required Background Investigations for all Firefighter Candidates now remaining of the Final Eligibility Register.

*(I) Fire – Amend Board of Fire and Police Commissioners' Rules and Regulations as to Paragraph (b) entitled "Residency" of Section 5.19 "Certification".*

The Fire Chief explained that the new Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Fire Department eliminates the Residency Requirement for the City's Firefighters. The Fire Chief noted that the Board's current Rules and Regulations still contains a provision [Section 5.19(b)] requiring such a residency requirement. The Fire Chief then requested that the Board amend its current Rules and Regulations to delete any residency requirement for Firefighters. [Police Chief Woody noted that his Police Department may also have this same issue]. Commissioner Phillips asked if the Fire Chief had yet discussed this proposed amendment with Roberta Holzwarth, the Board's legal counsel and the Fire Chief replied in the negative. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Authorize the Fire Chief to Consult with Board Attorney Holzwarth as to the proposed amendment of the Board's Rules and Regulations to eliminate the residency requirement for Firefighters and to report back to the Board on his discussions with Attorney Holzwarth. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the Fire Chief is hereby authorized to consult with Attorney Holzwarth on this proposed amendment of the Board's Rules and Regulations.

(J) *Fire – Amend Board of Fire and Police Commissioners' Rules and Regulations as to Elimination of Preference Points for Assigned Employees.*

The Fire Chief noted that the Board's current Rules and Regulations may authorize Firefighter Candidates who are also employees of the Independent Contractor providing Medical Transport Services for the Fire Department to claim Preference Points for said work for the Independent Contractor. The Fire Chief then requested that the Board amend its current Rules and Regulations to delete any residency requirement for Firefighters. Commissioner Phillips asked if the Fire Chief had yet discussed this proposed amendment with Roberta Holzwarth, the Board's legal counsel and the Fire Chief replied in the negative. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Authorize the Fire Chief to Consult with Board Attorney Holzwarth as to the proposed amendment of the Board's Rules and Regulations to eliminate Preference Points for work done as employees of the Independent Contractor who provides Medical Transport Services for the Fire Department. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the Fire Chief is hereby authorized to consult with Attorney Holzwarth on this proposed amendment of the Board's Rules and Regulations.

At 6:42 PM Fire Chief Schadle then departed the Meeting Room as there were no more Fire Department Agenda Items on tonight's Agenda.

(A) *Police – Certify Final Eligibility Register for Entry-Level Appointments.*

Police Chief Woody then presented to the Board a proposed and written Final Eligibility Register for Entry-Level Police Officer Candidates. The Board then reviewed said written Final Eligibility Register. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Certify As Presented the Entry-Level Police Officer Final Eligibility Register. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the Board has now certified the Entry-Level Police Officer Final Eligibility Register.

(B) *Police – Approve Entry-Level Candidates' Background Investigation Reports.*

Police Detective Sergeant Smaha then distributed to the Board the written Background Investigation Reports on seven (7) Entry-Level Police Officer Candidates whose names appeared on the Final Eligibility Register. The Board then reviewed each such Background Investigation Report and took the following actions as to the same:

(1) Candidate Ranked #1 Gerardo Veneges: Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Find that Candidate Veneges has successfully passed the required Background Investigation Step of the Hiring Process as required by the Board's current Rules and Regulations and that he be invited to submit to the required Polygraph Examination. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that Candidates Gerardo Veneges has successfully passed the required Background Investigation.

(2) Candidate Ranked #2 Ben Cook: Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Find that Candidate Cook has successfully passed the required Background Investigation Step of the Hiring Process as required by the Board's current Rules and Regulations and that he be invited to submit to the required Polygraph Examination. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that Candidate Ben Cook has successfully passed the required Background Investigation.

(3) Candidate Ranked #3 Tyler Stansford: The Police Chief reminded the Board that it had previously approved Candidate Stansford Request to be "Passed Over" at this time for reason that he was only a Junior in College. The Board then took no formal action as to Candidate Stansford at tonight's Meeting.

(4) Candidate Ranked #4 Victor Parra-Paredes: Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Find that Candidate Parra-Paredes has NOT successfully passed the required Background Investigation Step of the Hiring Process as required by the Board's current Rules and Regulations and that the name of Candidate Victor Parra-Paredes shall be removed from the Entry Level Police Officer Final Eligibility Register. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the name of Police Officer Entry-Level Candidate Victor Parra-Paredes shall be removed from the Final Eligibility Register.

(5) Candidate Ranked #5 Paige Tucker: Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Find that Candidate Paige Tucker has NOT successfully passed the required Background Investigation Step of the Hiring Process as required by the Board's current Rules and Regulations and that the name of Candidate Paige Tucker shall be removed from the Entry Level Police Officer Final Eligibility Register. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the name of Police Officer Entry-Level Candidate Paige Tucker shall be removed from the Final Eligibility Register.

(6) Candidate Ranked #6 Evan Bendel: Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Find that Candidate Evan Bendel has successfully passed the required Background Investigation Step of the Hiring Process as required by the Board's current Rules and Regulations and that he be invited to submit to the required Polygraph Examination. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that Candidate Evan Bendel has successfully passed the required Background Investigation.

(7) Candidate Ranked #7 Nicole Farley: The Police Chief reminded the Board that previously the Board had voted to remove the name of Entry-Level Police Candidate from the Final Eligibility Register at her written request for reason that Candidate Farley accepted employment with the Freeport Police Department. The Board thus took no formal action as to Candidate Nicole Farley at tonight's Meeting.

(8) Candidate Ranked #8 Branden Avila: Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Find that Candidate Branden Avila has NOT successfully passed the required Background Investigation Step of the Hiring Process as required by the Board's current Rules and Regulations and that the name of Candidate Branden Avila shall be removed from the Entry Level Police Officer Final Eligibility Register. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the name of Police Officer Entry-Level Candidate Branden Avila shall be removed from the Final Eligibility Register.

(C) *Police – Approve Entry-Level Candidates’ Polygraph Exam Reports.*

Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To formally request Entry-Level Police Officer Candidates Gerardo Veneges, Ben Cook and Evan Bendel to Submit to the Polygraph Examinations as required by the Board’s current Rules and Regulations. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that these three Entry-Level Police Officer Candidates are hereby invited to submit to the required Polygraph Examination as required by the Board’s current Rules and Regulations.

(E) *Police – Interview of Police Sergeant Promotional Candidates.*

The Board then conducted in-person interviews of the three Promotional Candidates for promotion to the rank of Police Sergeant. Police Detective Sergeant Smaha and Police Chief Woody also asked questions of each Promotional Candidate in the presence of the Board. After each of said interviews, the Board then discussed each Promotional Candidate first among itself and then with both Police Detective Sergeant Smaha and Police Chief Woody. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Promote Police Officer Paul King to the rank of Police Sergeant. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips	Aye
Commissioner Hunter	Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that Promotional Candidate Paul King was thus promoted to the rank of Police Sergeant.

(F) *Amend Board of Fire and Police Commissioners’ Rules and Regulations as to Paragraph (b) entitled “Residency” of Section 3.17 “Certification”.*

The Police Chief explained that the new Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Police Department eliminates the Residency Requirement for the City’s Police Officers. The Police Chief noted that the Board’s current Rules and Regulations still contains a provision [Section 3.17(b)] requiring such a residency requirement. The Police Chief then requested that the Board amend its current Rules and Regulations to delete any residency requirement for Police Officers. Commissioner Phillips asked if the Police Chief had yet discussed this proposed amendment with Roberta Holzwarth, the Board’s legal counsel and the Fire Chief replied in the negative. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Authorize the Police Chief to Consult with Board Attorney Holzwarth as to the proposed amendment of the Board’s Rules and Regulations to eliminate the residency requirement for Police Officers and to report back to the Board on his discussions with Attorney Holzwarth. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips     Aye  
Commissioner Hunter     Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the Police Chief is hereby authorized to consult with Attorney Holzwarth on this proposed amendment of the Board's Rules and Regulations.

(K)     *Board – Approval of Annual Report for CY 2022.*

Chair Hunter stated that in view of the late hour, the review and discussion on the proposed Annual Report for Calendar Year 2022 should be delayed until the Board's next Meeting. Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Postpone Consideration of this Agenda Item (i.e., the Annual Report for CY 2022) until the Board's next Special Meeting to be held at 6:00 o'clock P.M. on Wednesday, March 29, 2023. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A Roll Call Vote ensued with the following results:

Commissioner Phillips     Aye  
Commissioner Hunter     Aye

Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and that the Agenda of the Board's Special Meeting to be held on March 29, 2023 shall include the Review of Annual Report for CY 2022.

**OTHER BUSINESS:**     **None.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Commissioner Phillips made a verbal Motion To Adjourn. Commissioner Hunter verbally seconded this Motion. A voice vote was held and Chair Hunter declared the Motion as Passed and the Meeting as adjourned. The Meeting adjourned at about 10:00 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Michael J. Phillips*

Michael J. Phillips  
Secretary of the Board of Fire and  
Police Commissioners

*APPROVED by Vote of the Board of Fire and Police Commissioners on September 13, 2023.*