

**Minutes of the
La Porte City Fire Department
Merit Commission
February 4, 2015**

The La Porte City Fire Department Merit Commission met on February 4, 2015 at the Main Fire Station. Present were Commission members, James Parks, Edward Gondeck, Lewis Ridenour and Gary Travis. Also present were Chief Andrew Snyder, Assistant Chief A. C. Pressler and several Firefighters.

The meeting was called to order by President Parks at 6:32 pm. The minutes from the January, 2015, meeting were not available for reading.

The meeting began with Assistant Chief Pressler presenting copies of the revised performance rating forms for all positions to the Merit Commission. The matter was tabled until the next meeting, as the Merit Commission had not yet met as a group to discuss the proposed changes. Suggestions for additional changes which were made by staff were discussed with the understanding that the proposed system was a "fluid" document which could be modified to adopt appropriate changes later. The members of the forms committee were commended for their efforts in reviewing and revising the rating system.

Assistant Chief Pressler also reported that the mid-year performance appraisals were underway and expected to be completed in a timely manner.

Chief Snyder presented the Commission 3 letters from the Board of Public Works which authorized the replacement of retiring members of the Department, including: David Hucksted, Ron Stephenson and Gary Smith. All were scheduled to be leaving in February, 2015. Chief Snyder reported that the next Firefighter candidate, Andrew Fox, had begun the screening process. He requested the names of two additional candidates to fill the other vacancies. President Parks presented the Chief with one candidate, for whom he had received the required background check, and reported that he had submitted 4 additional names for background checks. He will submit the next candidate, when the background checks are completed.

Chief Snyder requested from the Commission, the names of the next 3 candidates for consideration to fill the vacancy for the Captain's position, which was created by the retirement of David Hucksted. Chief Snyder recommended Matt Schuster for the position. He accepted the offer and was approved for promotion by the Commission.

Chief Snyder reported that Jeremy Kelly had begun his orientation as a probationary Firefighter on March 4, 2015, and would be starting his training at the South Bend Fire Academy within a week.

Chief Snyder also requested confirmation of dates for the promotional testing for 2015. The Commission decided on May 4th, 5th, 11th and 12th. Sarah Smith had agreed to conduct the testing again. A change in text books will not be required before the upcoming testing.

Firefighter Doug Bernacki requested that the Merit Commission review the policy regarding the changing of the promotion list, when an individual resigns from another position. Currently that individual would move to the top of the promotion list for their former position. Mr. Bernacki pointed out that this seemed to be unfair and tended to devalue the efforts of others, who tested and were trying to advance their careers. The Commission agreed to review the matter.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:13 pm. The next meeting is schedule for March 4, 2015, at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary R. Travis, Vice President