

MINUTES

FIRE EXAMINATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

November 12, 2009
Civil Service Commission
9:30 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Cecilia Mascarenas, Commission President
Neil Berlin, Commissioner
Anna Flores, Commissioner
Earl Peterson, Executive Director
Antoinette Torres-Janke, Human Resource Supervisor
Jeff Wilson, Senior Human Resources Professional
Brian Kellogg, Senior Human Resources Professional
Chanda Turnbull, Associate Human Resources Professional
Don Ronyak, Recruitment
Captain Dale Chavez, F.I.R.E.
Captain Tony Martin, Colorado Black Professional Firefighters

Issue #1: Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Earl Peterson at 9:35 a.m. A motion was made by Commissioner Neal Berlin and seconded by Commissioner Anna Flores to approve the minutes of August 11, 2009. The motion carried.

Issue #2: Promotional and Entry Level Testing Update

Promotional

Jeff Wilson provided a demographic breakdown for the Fire Captain examination. 152 Fire Lieutenants were eligible for the examination and 78 registered to take the written examination that will be held in May 2010.

Fire Engineer registration opened on November 2, 2009 and to date 51 candidates have signed up. Registration closes on December 4, 2009. The written examination is scheduled for January 12, 2010.

Entry Level

Jeff stated that entry level firefighter registration opened on November 2, 2009 and all test appointments were filled within 1 hour and 15 minutes. Jeff provided those in attendance with a demographic breakdown of the 1118 fire applicants who have registered to test. The Commissioners noted some concern with the minority numbers. Jeff will provide the Commissioners with a detailed report on applicants who actually test following the test administration.

The Commissioners inquired how the current Fire registration numbers compared to the previous 2008 registration. Earl noted the numbers were similar but not as good as the 2006 registration.

Captain Tony Martin stated that our current struggles to attract minority applicants are no different than any other department or city. Earl stressed that the targeted recruiting which has been done over the last few years has helped in regards to diversity.

Issue #3: Recruitment

Don Ronyak commended the Commission staff in regards to how smooth the entry level firefighter application process went.

Don recognized the following firefighters for their help with making phone calls to potential fire applicants prior to registration opening.

Firefighter Robert Fichter
Firefighter Shawn Groom
Lieutenant Lewis Kelley
Firefighter James Koziol
Technician Douglas Manning
Engineer Wendi Smith
Firefighter Melissa Taylor

Issue #4: Follow-Up

Tony asked if CPAT fitness trainers and test proctors had to be recertified? Earl stated he was not aware of any recertification requirements but suggested Tony contact the department. Earl noted that individuals interested in assisting with CPAT testing do have to be certified by the department. Fire department personnel go through the certification process on their own time but are paid when providing assistance with the CPAT test.

Earl Peterson stated that walk-in registration for the entry level fire written examination will be reviewed prior to the Fire test administration and a determination will be made as to whether or not the Commission will add any additional test stations. Earl noted this decision would be made in collaboration with Recruiting. Don suggested 1200 as the cap. If test cancellations are received, the Commission will offer the available appointment to individuals registered as “walk-in’s” in the order they registered.

Captain Dale Chavez stated that F.I.R.E. will conduct tutoring for fire applicants. One area that F.I.R.E. is struggling with is how to help individuals prepare for the situational judgment questions that are part of the written examination. Dale contacted Katherine Fox with CWH Research (the test developers) but he did not feel that the meeting was productive in helping F.I.R.E develop study materials. He stated F.I.R.E was not looking for the actual answers to the test but wanted better tools in how to coach applicants in regard to the situational judgment questions. Earl suggested that applicants need to brush-up on their reading comprehension. He also suggested they use their life experiences and situations they have encountered to think about how they might handle the situations noted on the fire test.

The Department interview was also discussed. Earl stated the interview is a way to gauge an applicant's strengths and weaknesses. Brian noted that applicants are rated as strongly recommended, recommended and not recommended by the panel. Additionally, the panel is asked to provide written comments. These comments have been invaluable to helping the Chief and Manager with their review of the applicant files. Antoinette noted however that the panel ratings do not affect an applicant's established rank. Commissioner Berlin suggested that Dale might want to observe the interview process to see how it is conducted and how the ratings are established. Earl noted that individuals involved in tutoring were not allowed to view/participate in any testing/screening of applicants.

Discussion regarding the number of applicants versus the number of available openings ensued. One suggestion was to limit the number of out-of-state applicants or to go back to the residency requirement. Tony noted that he didn't think the residency provision would be acceptable but suggested the emphasis somehow should be put on local applicants. Tony also suggested that we may get more military applicants in the future because military personnel are exiting the military in large numbers. Additionally, he believes military applicants are more mature, have a better knowledge of the rank structure, know how to work in a team environment and would be physically fit.

Issue #5: Set Next Meeting Date

The next FERC meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2010 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 7.C.1.