

Columbia River Fire and Rescue
Civil Service Meeting
270 Columbia Blvd., St. Helens, OR 97051
November 6, 2024
12 p.m.

Staff Present: Chief Eric Smythe, Jeremy Lerhner, Chief Examiner W. Scott Jorgensen
Commissioners Present: Chair Ricky Linares and Mark Kreutzer

Linares called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.

New Business: Firefighter Paramedic List

Chief Eric Smythe said he's been working with the finance department and verified that he could add personnel. There are enough carryover funds to replace some vacant firefighter positions. He looked at the National Testing Network and there is a list to approve.

Six applicants have passed the tests and he wants to interview them. They're all required to do CPAT before receiving job offers. Smythe plans to do the interviews within the next month.

His plan is to fill half of the positions immediately in January and then hire the other half while the first group is at the academy. Two of the positions are for people who are leaving and hiring three would bring staffing up to 30 firefighter paramedics, which is 10 on each shift.

Smythe would also like to promote from within to fill a lieutenant position. It would still be a union position at 40 hours per week. He will advertise nationwide for a division chief position. The firefighter paramedic positions will also be posted nationally. Smythe has reached out to the six applicants on the list. Five of them have verified that they are still interested and he is waiting to hear back from the sixth.

His ask is for the Civil Service Commission to approve the list so he can set dates for the interviews. The list consists of people who have applied since April.

Commissioner Mark Kreutzer moved to approve the list. That motion was seconded by Commissioner Ricky Linares and adopted unanimously.

Promotion Test for Company Officer

Smythe said a lieutenant is leaving and another is retiring. Those vacancies will be created within the next six months. He wants to promote from within and do interviews with multiple HR scenarios, to be followed by a chief's interview that should be about an hour long. Smythe wants to do the lieutenant's exam in late January or early February.

This is a different approach than the fire district has taken before. Commissioners agreed that this approach makes sense.

Smythe said the positions will require three years of experience in fire service but the process will also be more inclusive. Such applicants will be more familiar with the agency's culture and this approach will allow for succession planning.

Smythe will have score sheets and sample questions for commissioners to review at the next meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 4 at 12 p.m.

Linares adjourned the meeting at 12:37 p.m.

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