



CITY OF MERRILL
POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION
MINUTES • MONDAY OCTOBER 3, 2016

Regular Meeting

City Hall Basement Conference Room

6:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Commission President Helmstadter called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Kurt Helmstadter	President	Present	
Mike Ravn		Present	
David Hayes		Absent	
Carol Holz		Present	
Don Heyel		Present	

Also in attendance: City Administrator Dave Johnson, Police Chief Ken Neff, Fire Chief Dave Savone, Police Captain Corey Bennett and City Clerk Bill Heideman. A representative from the Cable Access Channel was present to videotape the meeting.

II. Minutes of Previous Meeting(s):

1. Minutes of December 21, 2015 meeting

Motion (Ravn/Heyel) to approve.

RESULT:	APPROVED
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III. Status/Update Reports:

1. Police Chief Neff

The last two officers hired are working out well.

All promotions are going well.

An additional officer will be considered in the 2017 budget process.

Training is ongoing, with cooperative training with the Fire Department upcoming.

Community relations programs are ongoing.

The next Citizens Academy is scheduled to begin in November. Eventually, the City Hall Basement Conference room will be used as a Citizens Academy training room.

A grant of approximately \$14,000 has been received to purchase new defibrillators. Ballistic vests have been updated. Replacement of computers and radios in the squad cars is ongoing.

It is anticipated that, besides Police Chief Neff, there will be no retirements in the next two or three years.

Police Captain Bennett will be working with Police Chief Neff on the 2017 Police Department budget.

The current Police Department eligibility list will be reviewed.

There have been no recent noise complaints at the NTC training facility.

Police Chief Neff answered questions.

2. Fire Chief Savone

The Fire Department was one of 160 Fire Departments nationally to receive a safety award recently.

There were no recent hires, and there are no pending retirements. However, there are no eligible candidates on the current eligibility list.

The title of Captain has been changed to Battalion Chief.

The inaugural Student Fire Academy is scheduled to begin October 5th.

Training is aggressive and ongoing. All firefighters are state-certified Firefighter II, state-certified driver operators and state-certified fire inspectors.

A Mass Casualty training event was held in May.

A Firefighter/Paramedic that was on sick leave has now returned to work.

Two firefighters are currently off under the Family Leave Act.

Work has begun on a Rescue Task Force.

A \$20,000 DNR grant has been received.

Fire Chief Savone answered questions.

IV. Agenda items for consideration:

1. Establish selection procedure for new Police Chief (Police Chief Neff retirement is upcoming).

Police Chief Neff has submitted a letter indicating that he intends to retire, effective March 12th, 2017.

Alderman Helmstadter explained the options for hiring a successor to fill the Police Chief position. He stated that the search could be done within the current department, a regional search could be conducted, or a nationwide search could be conducted. Alderman Helmstadter suggested that the search could begin within the current department.

Mike Ravn is in favor of a search within the State of Wisconsin.

Carol Holz suggested that a search outside the current department could lead to lower morale with the current officers.

Don Heyel stated that he has mixed feelings, but does not think there are problems in the current department.

It was noted that, if the hiring begins within the current department, the position would be posted for five days.

Police Chief Neff and City Administrator Johnson speculated that there are probably three individuals currently on the Merrill Police Department that would be qualified to be Police Chief.

Motion (Heyel/Holz) to begin the search for a new Police Chief within the department. If necessary, the search could be expanded later. Motion carried.

The next steps in the hiring process were discussed. The possibility of doing psychological testing was considered. Both Mike Ravn and Carol Holz are in favor of conducting this testing. City Administrator Johnson will conduct research to determine what types of tests are available. It was agreed that a decision can be made later in the process on whether psychological testing should be conducted.

Discussion was held on general testing, and which applicants should be tested. City Administrator Johnson suggested testing only those applicants that will be invited for an interview. The commission members had no objection to that suggestion. City Administrator Johnson will conduct research to determine what types of tests are available.

The degree of input from the current chief on the hiring process was then discussed. City Administrator Johnson suggested that input from Police Chief Neff would be valuable. Police Chief Neff responded that, he does not mind providing input, but does not want to sit on an interview panel.

V. **Establish date, time and location of next meeting(s)**

Thursday, October 27th, 2016 at 3:00 P.M. in the City Hall Basement Conference Room. At that meeting, interviews for the Police Chief position will be conducted.

VI. Public Comment Period

None.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Holz/Ravn) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 7:00 P.M.