



CITY OF MERRILL
POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION
AGENDA • MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2024

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

6:00 PM

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Consider approving minutes from the previous meeting**
 - 1. Minutes from the February 04, 2024 meeting
- III. General Agenda Items for Consideration**
 - 1. Update on limited-term employment for Police Recruit Academy Training. This item passed the Personnel & Finance Committee on May 28, 2024
- IV. Closed Session**
 - 1. The Commission may convene in closed session pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes Chapter 19.85(1)(b) to conduct Police Office candidate interview(s).
- V. Reconvene in Open Session**
 - 1. The Commission may reconvene in open session for possible action related to the closed session item.
- VI. Adjournment**

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CITY OF MERRILL

Police and Fire Commission

City Hall Lower-Level Conference Room-1004 East First Street, Merrill, WI

Members Present: Eric Malm, Norm Hanson, and Lisa Gervais

Members Absent: Nicole Johnson and Jeremy Thompson

Others Present: City Administrator Rod Akey and Fire Chief Klug

I. **Call to Order**

Chairman Hanson called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm.

II. **Approval of Prior Minutes**

Minutes from the October 23, 2023, up for approval. Motion made to accept the minutes. (Malm/Hanson). Carried.

III. **Public Comment**

None

IV. **Closed Session:** Convened at 6:07 pm.

Pursuant to Wisconsin State Statutes Section 19.85(1)(c), moved that the Commission go into closed session to conduct Fire Fighter/Paramedic candidate interviews. (Gervais/Malm) Carried.

V. **Reconvene in Open Session:** Reconvened at 7:10 pm.

The committee may reconvene in open session to recommend applicant approvals. Motion to move to open session (Gervais/Malm). Carried.

Motion made to place two fire fighter/paramedic candidates for hiring eligibility list at the discretion Chief Klug not to exceed one year. (Malm/Gervais)
Motion carried.

VI. **Adjournment**

Move to adjourn at 7:12 pm. (Hanson/Malm). Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Gervais, Commissioner



City of Merrill
Merrill Police Department
Corey Bennett, Chief of Police
Dale Bacher, Captain

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Limited Term Employment for Police Recruit Academy Training

Recent recruitment of new officers has proven very difficult for our agency and surrounding agencies. It is apparent that our anticipated sworn vacancies could far outpace our ability to fill those positions, creating an ongoing staffing deficit. We have strategies to operationally adapt to this deficit as needed but recruitment and hiring still need to be addressed in the long term.

Currently our pool of candidates consists of those with a minimum of 60 college credits and those who have successfully completed a recruit academy in the last two to three years. Those viable candidates have diminished through the region. We have experienced some success in recruitment directly from ongoing recruit academy classes but those opportunities are disappearing as well. Most recruit academy classes are filled with “sponsored” officers already hired by regional law enforcement agencies. This “sponsored” employee is the opportunity I would like to explore in order to expand our recruitment pool.

I would like to start evaluating a broader pool of candidates who may be short of the current minimum requirements. If we find a promising candidate, we could sponsor them in the next available regional recruit academy and maybe even give them a window to obtain their required 60 college credits. I would propose this as a non-sworn LTE position paying \$15-20 per hour for the duration of the recruit academy. Upon successful completion of the recruit academy we would be reimbursed by the State of WI for the cost of the academy only. If they fail, we would absorb the cost of the academy. The wages and any applicable benefits paid would be less than a sworn officer position, assuming this runs in conjunction with a sworn officer vacancy. This would prevent a budget over-run. The candidate would be required to undergo the same hiring process as a sworn officer and would be given a contingent offer of employment requiring successful completion of the recruit academy and 60 college credits in addition to the other requirements such as occupational health screening, drug test, psychological evaluation, background, etc. Once they successfully complete the recruit academy we would transition their employment from LTE to a full-time sworn officer. I look forward to the discussion and your consideration at the next Personnel and Finance meeting.

Sincerely,

Corey Bennett, Chief of Police