City of Whitewater Police and Fire Commission
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2009

ABSTRACT / SYNOPSIS OF THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE OFFICIAL ACTIONS OF THE POLICE AND FIRE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WHITEWATER, WALWORTH AND JEFFERSON COUNTIES, WISCONSIN

CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL
President Triebold called the meeting of the Whitewater Police and Fire Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. Members present: Triebold, Bilgen-Craggs, Verduzco, Taylor. Members absent: Wendt. Also present: Chief Coan and Lt. Otterbacher and Support Services Manager Boyd

CONVENE INTO CLOSED SESSION: At 7:02 pm Bilgen-Craggs asked for a motion to convene into closed session to interview three patrol officer candidates, to reconvene per Wisconsin State Statue §19.85(1) (c) "Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility." There was a motion from Taylor and a second from Bilgen-Craggs. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. Boyd stepped out of the closed session.

RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION: At 8:40 pm Taylor made a motion to reconvene into open session with a second from Verduzco. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF RECOMMENDATION TO CHIEF OF POLICE: A motion to recommend approval of the slate of candidates, based on their passing medical and psychological testing, was made by Taylor with a second by Bilgen-Craggs. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote. Bilgen-Craggs said all the candidates were strong, but Daniel Meyer was the strongest candidate.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the May 20, 2009 meeting were approved on a Bilgen-Craggs/Taylor motion. The motion was passed by unanimous voice vote.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

A. DISCUSSION CONCERNING LETTER FROM RUSSELL BAUMGARD

Triebold read Mr. Baumgard's letter and the ticket back aloud. Triebold stated that the arrest was September 10th and the letter was dated October 6th. Taylor asked why Officer Vander Steeg held the defendants hand, but wrote cooperative on the ticket back. Triebold said that the defendant was hiding a bottle. Chief Coan said that he discussed the arrest with Officer Vander Steeg and his backup, Officer Martin, and concluded that Officer Vander Steeg used the correct defense/arrest tactics and the defendant didn't complain about injuries at the time possibly due to his level of intoxication. Chief Coan said that Lt. Gray tried contacting a woman who was with the defendant several times. Chief Coan said the defendant can go forward filing a

complaint with the City Clerk to request payment of his medical bills. Bilgen-Craggs encouraged a quick turnaround of investigations, but realized that Lt. Gray had trouble contacting Mr. Baumgard's friend. Triebold mentioned that the PFC would have taken care of it at the November meeting, but it was delayed until December. Bilgen-Craggs wants to know if there are complaints and would like copies of letters from the Chief to complainants. Chief Coan said that Lt. Otterbacher does compile a yearly overview of complaints and he feels that it is important to be transparent. Chief Coan said that complaints are taken seriously. Triebold asked if the PFC should respond. Chief Coan said that they are welcome to do so. He did mention that the letter was cc'd to the Chief and the PFC, but was originally sent to the court officer. Bilgen-Craggs didn't feel that it was necessary to respond.

B. CHIEF'S REPORT:

1. PERSONNEL/STAFFING UPDATE:

Chief Coan said that Officer Terrence Sullivan left on his own during probation. The interview tonight is to cover his position. Officer Zena Villarello is on medical leave until May. If she is cleared by her doctor to come back to work then the department would send her to our own doctor for clearance. Officer Villarello's injury happened off duty. Officer Jennifer Ludlum is working transitional/light duty because she is pregnant so we are down three officers. Daniel would start on January 4th, but needs to pass the physical and psychiatric evaluations. Taylor asked what was included on the written test. Lt. Otterbacher said that the department uses the WI Chiefs of Police test which includes math, reading, grammar and a written report component. Lt. Otterbacher said that the State test is harder, but you can lose a lot of good candidates. Chief Coan said that the WI Chiefs of Police test is validated and a lot of chiefs and sheriffs use it. Taylor asked if there are questions about law enforcement and Lt. Otterbacher said no. Chief Coan said that the test gages basic skills. Taylor mentioned that the PFC met in May concerning this same position and wondered how moral was now. Chief Coan said that Officer Kleinfeldt was working now. Lt. Otterbacher said that the hardest months are September, October, and November. She said that right now there are no special events which cause overtime. The new person will be ready when the weather is better and the officers can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Taylor said that the council voted to add the position to cut down on overtime. Chief Coan said that the position was added to 2nd shift and that overtime due to investigations, sick time, and special events are a contractual arrangement. Lt. Otterbacher said that the clerical staff and dispatchers are responding to issues, but officers produce more work such as drunk drivers. She said that the good news is that the officers are catching drunk drivers and there are two officers at domestic disturbances. Chief Coan said the council was kind enough to grant the 24th officer, but that we haven't been at that level due to the medical leaves and people leaving. Bilgen-Craggs said that because of the type of department we have we may never have a full staff. Chief Coan said that we can't compete with better paying departments or people moving closer to family. It is good if we can get three to five years from a good person. Bilgen-Craggs mention that retention is 18 months nationally.

The next regular meeting of the Police and Fire Commission will be Wednesday, February 10, 2010 at 7:00p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: A Taylor/Verduzco motion to adjourn was passed by unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Boyd
Support Services Manager