

MINUTES OF MEETING
AVON CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
Held Wednesday, January 22, 2020

AVON CITY HALL

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 A.M. by Peter Kratt, Chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairman Peter Kratt and Commissioners Alan Wojciechowski and Tony Sarraino.

In attendance: Law Director John Gasior, Assistant Fire Chief Mike Emling, Police Chief Rich Bosley, and Recording Secretary, Rose Seighman

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

Mrs. Seighman asked Chief Bosley if he had anything to add to the Agenda for today. It was decided to discuss the upcoming Police Entrance exam under the “Discussion” section.

Mr. Sarraino made a motion to accept the agenda as published. Mr. Wojciechowski seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING OF 1/15/2020:

Mr. Sarraino made a motion to accept the minutes from the January 15th meeting. Mr. Wojciechowski seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Mr. Kratt asked Chief Bosley or Mr. Gasior to discuss the Police Entrance Exam. Mr. Gasior indicated that Chief Bosley would like to contract with the National Testing Network (NTN) for the upcoming Police Entrance Exam. This is the entity that conducted the last Police Promotional Exam (Sergeant). Mr. Kratt and Mr. Gasior both attended that exam on August 26, 2019. Now Chief would like to use the same company for the Entrance Exam. Mr. Gasior asked if Chief Bosley had any details regarding the test (questions, video, written, etc). It is a combination of written and video. It is between 2 and 2.5 hours. Mr. Gasior explained that with NTN, the applicants would not all gather in one room at Avon High School and take the test together, they would be taking the exam at NTN Testing Centers, which are located across the country. In this case, the applicant would go online and apply with NTN, answer what type of test they want to take (in this case, it would be Law Enforcement/Police Entrance Exam), and they would schedule themselves for a test. The City of Berea is currently holding a Police Entrance Exam through NTN and their notice says the applicant has until February 29th to take the test. Their results will be forwarded to Berea Civil Service after the February 29 deadline. A person in Indiana can apply, or any

place around the country. Once the test results are forwarded to the Civil Service Commission, any extra credit points will be added and they will be ranked. At that time, the list will be handed to the Commission to be certified. Mr. Gasior explained that the process has no anonymity and there is no opportunity for pre or post grade examination of grading, which our rules call for. Mr. Kratt said it sounds like using this company for testing would require a serious review of our Civil Service Rules with some changes. Mr. Gasior said yes, or at least a Rule Amendment to move forward, even if it's just to carve out an exception for the testing done by this particular entity (NTN). Mr. Gasior asked Chief Bosley if he was aware of any other companies that do this type of testing, does NTN have any competitors out there. Chief Bosley responded he is not aware of any competitors. Mr. Gasior said we are still going to work through this process, but those are the 2 obstacles he sees (anonymity and no pre or post grade challenges). As the Chief said, it does sound like a really good testing method and it eliminates the need to be here on Saturdays to proctor the exam, etc. Mr. Kratt asked if this is becoming more common and wanted to know if any city other than Berea has used NTN. Chief Bosley responded that there are hundreds, if not thousands of agencies using this testing company. There are well over 100 agencies in Ohio alone that have used NTN, with Central Ohio being the biggest user. They have been using it exclusively for a number of years. Chief Bosley went over the Civil Service Minutes from Westlake (who recently used NTN) the minutes (from June – September) covered all the rule changes that they implemented. Mr. Kratt asked if Westlake's test was an entrance exam or promotional. This test was an entrance exam, he is not sure if they used it for promotional. Chief Bosley explained in a little more detail how the test is taken. You do not take it online in your home. Once you apply with NTN, you pick a date, time & place to go to one of their Testing Centers and you take the test there. The closest testing location to Avon is at Tri-C. Mr. Gasior has to look at what Westlake did with their rules. He knows Berea was revamping their rules as well. Every city will have to address pre and post grade testing, as he believes most cities have that provision. Westlake had that provision in their rules. Mr. Sarraino asked if these rules are mandated by the state. Chief Bosley said they are not. Mr. Gasior said it's interesting because we will no longer have to proctor the test, but it does raise issues of mistakes, everybody makes mistakes. It's nice to be able to review if there is a mistake made. In our case, the applicants would be able to audit it if they believe a mistake was made. In this case there is no challenge. Mr. Kratt asked if there have been many objections made by test takers and Chief Bosley said he hasn't heard of any but hasn't really researched it. He has spoken to people that have been hired using the NTN testing and it appears a lot of them, especially the younger men and women, seem to really like it, because you don't have to be at a certain place on a certain date at a certain time. If someone took Berea's exam, and then 3 or 4 months from now, Avon was giving a test, that applicant does not have to take another test. A test is good for 1 year from the date you take it. It costs \$35 to take the initial test, to apply to any other municipality after the 1st one, the applicant simply goes to NTN online, pays them \$10 and the applicant can have their test results sent to Avon as well. Mr. Kratt asked Chief Bosley if he believes this testing will result in better than, as good as, or worse than the type of candidates we get now. Chief Bosley said he hopes it will increase our pool of candidates and have better test results. Most entrance exams are simply general knowledge tests, the NTN model goes further and goes into "common sense" testing rather than just "I know this fact". Just because someone memorized an answer doesn't mean they have common sense regarding that fact or know how to apply it. In addition, since the applicant can schedule their exam at a time and place convenient for them, rather than them having to show up on a specific date and specific time, like we have in the past, he hopes to get a much greater pool of candidates. Chief Bosley believes a candidate can only take the exam once a year, but he will verify that. The candidate will get 3 scores from the exam, a video score, written score and a reading score. Mr. Gasior would like to get someone from NTN to come in and talk with the Commission, the Chiefs and Mr. Gasior. Even if

it is a conference call, that would be fine. This way the Commission can ask any questions and determine whether the company really is testing merit and fitness for the job. It is in the City Charter that the Civil Service function is to determine that. Mr. Kratt is speaking only for himself, but if the Police Chief is recommending this, and the rules need to be modified, he does not see why we could not accept this. Mr. Gasior said we will do more research to make sure we are fully aware of the process and we can fully explain it, and we are already 80% there. Mr. Kratt asked about the timing of the entrance exam and when Chief might want to have the exam. Will this work out timing wise with what he has in mind? Chief Bosley said that we will have to make it work. Mr. Gasior asked about the notice and Chief Bosley said we put out our notice of exam and NTN has our notice of exam on their site as well. Mr. Gasior asked about the timelines we have regarding exams, 45 days before the exam and 30 days before an exam, etc. Chief Bosley said we will advertise following those Civil Service rules and NTN will post the same information. We require the applicants to sign up within so many days before the exam. Our notice will need to have the correct wording and dates to line up with our Civil Service Rules.

Typically what happens is that NTN has their own application, they will fill that out, and most cities have an application that they will need to fill out as well. Mr. Gasior said a lot of things will need to be addressed so we have a “date of application”, we need that to issue extra credit points. That is critical in our rules – date of application. We need to address all of these things before we go forward.

Mr. Kratt asked if this type of testing has come up at any of his law director meetings, etc. He answered that it has not. Mr. Gasior would like to call Pete Nevada at Clemons Nelson to see if there have been any challenges to Civil Service Rules. Mr. Kratt indicated he would like that as well. Mr. Gasior said Civil Service Rules are rules that go back to the early 1900’s or late 1800’s, they don’t change much. The basic rules were adopted many years ago, thought out by smart people. They came up with these rules and there were reasons for them. We are now going with a company that wants to throw out those tried and true rules and want to do things a different way. And it’s not to say different isn’t good, it’s just that we need to study this a little bit. Mr. Kratt would appreciate it if Mr. Gasior contacted Clemons Nelson. Mr. Gasior will follow up with Westlake and might contact their law director as well. If we can make everything work within the framework of our rules, with one or two exceptions, that is fine. If we are going to have to throw out things in our rules that we still need for the Fire Department, then we will need two sets of rules. The Promotional Exam for Police that was done with NTN was relatively simple, we had everyone (5 applicants) sign a waiver. Nobody gave us a hard time, everyone was satisfied with how the exam went. But when you are talking open competitive exam, we are going with a bigger group of people.

Chief Bosley confirmed the test is 2 hours 20 minutes, there are 46 video questions, 15 report writing questions and 30 reading component questions.

Mr. Kratt asked for any additional questions – there were none.

ACTION ITEMS:

Rule IV Section 4 – Eliminate second sub paragraph B

Mr. Kratt indicated that both of these Rule changes were read and discussed at the last meeting.

Mr. Wojciekowski made a motion to remove Rule IV, Section 4, second sub-paragraph B. Mr. Sarraino seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

Rule IV Section 11 – Eliminate sub section G

Mr. Wojciekowski made a motion to remove Rule IV, Section 11, sub-paragraph G. Mr. Sarraino seconded and the motion passed 3-0.

CHAIRMAN’S COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS:

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 10:00 A.M.

ADJOURN:

Following a unanimous vote, today’s meeting was adjourned at 10:25 A.M.

PASSED: _____ **SIGNED BY:** _____

Peter Kratt, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Rose Seighman, Recording Secretary

C: John Gasior
Chief Bosley
Chief Root
Rose Seighman