

MINUTES OF MEETING
AVON CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
Held Wednesday, March 4, 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 Commissioner Alan Wojciechowski.

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

Tony Sarraino will not be in attendance today.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA:

Mr. Wojciechowski made a motion to accept the agenda as published. Mr. Kratt seconded and the motion passed 2-0.

APPROVE MINUTES OF MEETING OF 2/26/2020:

Mr. Wojciechowski made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 26th meeting. Mr. Kratt seconded and the motion passed 2-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

Mrs. Seighman proceeded to go over the handout she distributed. The handout goes over the procedures the candidates will follow when they apply for the Firefighter Entrance Exam and when they apply for the Patrol Officer Entrance Exam. Procedures will be different than in the past for 2 reasons:

- The City of Avon recently went to an online employment application; paper applications are no longer accepted, this changes the procedures for applying.
- The Patrol Entrance Exam, with the approval of the Commission today, will go through the National Testing Network, an online exam company. That requires us to change some of our procedures as well.

One of the more important parts of this change of procedure is that each applicant must be able to scan and upload their associated documentation to their online application. This includes any documentation pertaining to extra points the candidate might be eligible for as well. Once the fire applications are received by our HR Department, the applicant will receive an email indicating that their application has been received and it is either complete or incomplete. If it is incomplete they will be instructed how to

get us the information that is still required. Once the application is complete, they can come to City Hall to pay their \$20 exam fee. When the city receives that \$20 exam fee, that will be their application date. The application date is important, as it is referred to in several places in our rules, including when it comes to tie scores as well as extra points. This is all spelled out in the hand-out Mrs. Seighman gave everyone.

The procedure for the Patrol Entrance Exam will be slightly different, as they don't have an exam fee to pay, they pay National Testing Network directly. For the application date for this exam, we will use the date the applicant first uploaded their City of Avon Employment Application. This will be the first time we are using NTN for an entrance exam, so we will work closely with Chief Bosley to work out these procedures.

Mr. Kratt asked how long this has been in place, with the uploading of documentation. Mrs. Seighman said it has been about 6 or 9 months since the City started their online applications. So, this is the first time we've used this online process for the Police & Fire exams.

Mr. Gasior asked Chief Bosley if we are having just the Patrol entrance exam or if we are also having a promotional exam with NTN. Chief replied that we also need a Sergeant's exam, as one of our current Sergeants is retiring on March 31, 2020. Mr. Gasior asked if he could temporarily fill that position but the answer is no. We need to have a promotional exam to fill this position. The Sergeants exam will need to be announced at least 45 days before the exam. Mr. Gasior noted that the examination notice for the Sergeant's exam will need to specify the rule change that is proposed, specifically that there will be no anonymity and there is no pre or post grade challenges.

Mr. Gasior shared that he has been in contact with Steph from NTN. She was going to send Mr. Gasior documentation to bring to the Commission Meeting, however, she was unable to do that before our meeting. She did say she would be able to participate in a conference call. On a speaker phone, we called Steph. Introductions were made and Steph briefly gave the group an overview of National Testing Network. They've been in the testing business for almost 30 years. They started out west and made their way east.

Mr. Gasior then discussed how we have used NTN for a promotional exam, however, those candidates all had to sign a waiver because our Civil Service Rules requires anonymity and allow for pre and post grade challenges, which NTN could not accommodate. Mr. Gasior then brought up Mr. Kratt's question from our last Civil Service meeting, which was: what if a candidate sees something on the exam that doesn't seem right, what are their options for challenging a question or a video? Steph said that it depends on the exam, for the entrance exam, it depends on where the person took the exam, whether it was computer or paper/pencil. Computer based exams can be challenged, but will probably be overruled. If it was a paper/pencil exam, it can be hand scored to verify. For a promotional, it can be hand scored by their scoring team and if need be, the exam can be reviewed on a question by question basis with a team member.

Mr. Gasior then asked if NTN could please copy Rose Seighman on any issues that come up with challenges from a candidate, so we are up to date on what is going on. She agreed. The entrance exam challenges go directly from the candidate to NTN, so they will keep us in the loop. As for the promotional exams, the challenges would come to the Civil Service Commission and we, in turn, would go to NTN with them.

Mr. Gasior asked if the candidate will see anything when they sign up indicating there is an opportunity to challenge a question if need be. Steph said the information is not out there like that. But the information is out there that if they have ANY questions regarding the exam, there is a number to call. Steph will let NTN know that the Commission would like to know of any questions that candidates bring up.

Regarding the validation of the test: Mr. Kratt is asking for clarification on this validation that has taken place. Steph said she will send over information regarding the validation process. Mr. Kratt asked her for a brief explanation. Steph explained that it was validated to use with all agencies nationally, that it is fair and applicable to everyone across the nation. Mr. Gasior recapped that NTN would defend the validity of their test, based upon the experts that have analyzed the exam and established it as a valid exam to test for merit and fitness in that subject matter. Mr. Kratt then asked about the cost of getting it validated, because the documentation he has indicates this is an extra cost. Steph answered that there is an extra cost for validation and they recommend the validation happens before the exam if you wanted to do that. The validation would take place at a local level, but it has already been validated at a national level. Steph said once she sends over the validation documentation, we will understand it better. Mr. Gasior is not overly concerned about this. He will take a look at the information Steph will forward. Berea and Westlake are using NTN, so he will follow up with them and see what they did validation-wise. But he still believes the test would be validated simply because it is in such wide use.

Mr. Gasior asked if there were any other questions. Assistant Chief Emling asked how NTN works with the Fire Exam. Steph answered for entrance exam, it is four portions: video, mechanical, math and reading portions. It works the same as the Police entrance exam, the candidate would go to a testing center and take their exam. Promotional is administered in house, just like police promotional. Mr. Gasior asked if they could look at a disc of an example of what the entry and promotional exams might look like. Steph said that there were and she will send the entrance exam and promotional Lieutenant exam samples. We ended the call with Steph at NTN.

Mr. Gasior said we know that there will be kinks in this process with NTN, but we will go through with these exams. We will learn a lot and will share everything with the Commission and the Fire Department. Chief Root shared that he does think this type of testing is the wave of the future. It makes no sense for every department to run their own test, when something like this, on a national basis, is available. Mr. Gasior said NTN has taken the multiple-choice test and visualized it. Instead of conjuring up the vision of a 3-story building on fire and answer questions, you will see a graphic video and then will be asked important questions about whether things are being done correctly or not. He thinks we are finally taking the technology and putting it to good use. Paper and pencil exams are 20th century.

ACTION ITEMS:

Approve Rule Change - Rule IV, Section 1, new subsection C

Mr. Wojciechowski made a motion to approve the rule change of Rule IV Section 1 new subsection C. Mr. Kratt seconded and the motion passed 2-0.

Approve Police Promotional and Entrance Exam using NTN

Mr. Wojciechowski made a motion to approve the promotional and entrance exams for Police using NTN. Mr. Kratt seconded and the motion passed 2-0.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:

Mr. Kratt stated that it has become obvious to him that we need to have some kind of review of our Civil Service Rules. They are getting dated. Can Mr. Gasior and Mrs. Seighman work with Clemans-Nelson on this? Mr. Gasior said Berea is revamping their rules and we know Westlake had to make some changes to their rules. Mr. Gasior said that the area that he believes needs some attention are the portions having to do with testing, how we are going to test, etc. Old rules where a candidate sits for a test but has a number rather than a name – are those rules still applicable? It is something we have to look at and we still need to protect the rights of the applicant. He was glad to hear that NTN will allow the candidate to make a phone call or send an email with their concern. As Mr. Kratt understands it, the candidate will be able to notify Mrs. Seighman if he/she has an issue BUT the challenge will go through NTN first and they will let us know about each issue. Mr. Gasior would like to see that the candidate logged their concern with NTN, NTN addressed it and then brought us up to date. That way we know the candidate's concern was heard and they ruled accordingly. All of this is new and we will need to adopt new rules. Mr. Kratt asked that it be a priority for Mr. Gasior.

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Regarding the revamping of civil service rules, Chief Root asked if we have reached out to other, similar cities to Avon, to see what they do. Perhaps look at their rules so we don't need to reinvent the wheel. Mr. Gasior said they are doing that. He already has the rules from Westlake and Berea and he can get other cities as well.

Is it possible to do video conferencing for some of these Civil Service Meetings? Mr. Gasior explained that it is a public meeting/records issue and they won't allow video conferencing. It is in the Ohio Revised Code. Chief Root said that is really antiquated. Mr. Gasior said the law could change, but right now, it is black and white. You can participate by phone, but you cannot vote and you can't count for a quorum. If we had Mr. Sarraino on a speaker phone, that would be best, even though he could not vote or be part of the quorum. In the future, Mr. Kratt would like Mr. Sarraino to be conferenced in via phone.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

There was a discussion on the next meeting date and it was decided, since the Fire promotional exam is March 21 and the entrance exam is April 4 and then promotional assessments weekend of April 10, we will bump out the next meeting to the end of April.

Wednesday, April 29, 2020 at 10:00 A.M.

ADJOURN:

Following a unanimous vote, today's meeting was adjourned at 10:45 A.M.

PASSED: _____ **SIGNED BY:** _____

Peter Kratt, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Rose Seighman, Recording Secretary

C: John Gasior
Chief Bosley
Chief Root
Rose Seighman