



**City of Springfield
Residency Commission
30 Pearl Street
Springfield, MA 01103**

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Residency Commissioners

Drew Piemonte, Co-Chair
Judith Crowell, Co-Chair
Genesis Velez
Michael Fenton
Gladys Oyola
Alex Sherman

Meeting of Thursday, April 6, 2023

MINUTES-PUBLIC MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. Commissioners Drew Piemonte, Michael Fenton, Judith Crowell, Genesis Velez and Alex Sherman were present.

FIRST order of business-Approval of Minutes:

Commissioner Fenton motioned to approve the meeting minutes from February 2, 2023 and March 2, 2023. Motion was 2nded by Commissioner Alex Sherman with a roll call vote to approve.

SECOND order of business-Discussion with Department Heads – Impact of Residency

Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Christopher Cignoli spoke with the commission about some of challenges he has faced as a result of the residency requirement. Director Cignoli estimated he has about 136 employees and has about a 10% vacancy. With the exception of a few positions all other employees are union and hiring has to go through civil service and the civil service list. Director Cignoli reviewed the process of picking applicants from the list and he stated the civil service list used to be long with over 100 people and recently there were 7 people on the list. He stated if the civil service list is exhausted and they have to advertise positions in the past they would receive 15-20 responses and now they get 1-2 applicants. There have been instances where he has offered positions to people who live in the city who would not accept positions due to the residency requirement. Director Cignoli also told the commission in instances where all options for filling a position have been exhausted and a waiver is issued this can create animosity with other employees who must abide by the residency requirement. He also stated the last 4 people DPW hired came from other city departments and this is something other departments are also doing to fill positions.

Police Department Superintendent Cheryl Clapprood appeared on behalf of the Police Department with Deputy Chief William Cochrane and Lynn Vedovelli. Superintendent Clapprood said Police faces similar changes because they also use the civil service list and residency has been a long-standing issue for her department. Residency is a major issue when it comes to hiring civilians. There are a number of open positions and quality candidates are applying but they do not live in Springfield and are not willing to move into the city. Ms.

Residency Commission – Public Session Minutes – April 6, 2023

Vedovelli said she has found fewer applicants are applying for positions and those that do apply and go through the entire interview process and are offered positions but are unwilling to take them because the applicant's spouse is unwilling to move into the city. She stated some are accepting positions knowing they have a year to move into the city and as they approach their anniversary date and are required to move into the city they are resigning from their positions after gaining the work experience in some technical areas such as body worn camera analysts. There was discussion about regarding the civil service process and test and the challenges the city faces. Superintendent Clapprood also explained they are not getting as many cadet applicants as did in past years. In the past there could be 300-400 applicants and recently 43 signed up and 21 showed up for the exam and 15 passed. Cadets also face residency challenges. Superintendent Clapprood also explained the police department will get down to around 15% vacancy for positions as there are current openings and retirements which will happen before she can run another class at the police academy. Labor Relations Director William Mahoney also spoke to the commission generally on the concept of civil service and how tests are administered. There was further discussion regarding how long the hiring and testing process takes and as a result applicants decide not to move forward with the hiring process.

City Solicitor Judge John Payne, Jr. also spoke with the commission on behalf of the Law Department. Solicitor Payne stated the Law Dept. is having an issue with filling vacant positions. As a result, Law has increased starting salaries for some positions but they are still either not receiving any applications for those positions or applicants who are not qualified are applying. Attorney Alesia Days said the department has been successful with filling some positions but there is not a large number of lawyers that live in the city. Commissioner Fenton stated he believes the applicant pool for law is somewhat older and people who may already have a home and roots in other communities because this is not necessarily their first position in the legal field. Solicitor Payne also stated the departments starting salaries are lower when compared to other starting salaries for assistant district attorneys.

THIRD order of business-Update – Discussion on Reporting Requirement

The commission discussed how the report should be disseminated. It was decided the report will be posted on the city website and a link would be sent out to city council once the report is released.

FOURTH order of business-Executive Session:

Case Assignment

Commissioner Fenton made a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing employment matters with the intent that the commission does not return into open session. Motion was 2nded by Commissioner Sherman with a roll call vote to approve. The body would not be returning to open session.