

## MINUTES

### WILLMAR POLICE COMMISSION

Monday, February 3, 2014

The annual mandatory meeting of the Willmar Police Civil Service Commission was held on Monday, February 3, 2014, at 4:30 p.m., at the Green Mill in Willmar.

Present were Police Civil Service Commission members Dennis Anfinson, Cassie Akerson and Kathy Schwantes. City Administrator Charlene Stevens, Police Chief David Wyffels and Administrative Assistant Susan Edwards were also present.

The meeting was called to order by President Anfinson at 4:38 p.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Schwantes, seconded by Commissioner Akerson, to approve the minutes from the meetings on October 22, 2013, December 4, 2013 and December 16, 2013, as submitted. **Motion carried.**

Election of officers was held, with the positions rotating as follows: President – Dennis Anfinson; Vice President – Cassie Akerson; and Secretary – Kathy Schwantes. A motion was made by Commissioner Schwantes, seconded by Commissioner Akerson, to approve the elections as stated. **Motion carried**

A discussion was held on the review of the current Police Civil Service Rules and Regulations. Commissioner Anfinson inquired if there was still interest in abolishing the Police Civil Service Commission, as he knew it had been discussed in 2007. Chief Wyffels explained that the main reason the discussion came up to abolish the Commission in 2007 was that Chief Kulset saw it as a way to speed up the officer hiring process.

Chief Wyffels explained that having a Commission does slow down the hiring process, but overall he feels it's important to have the Commission. Chief Wyffels stated the Commission serves an important function and when facing the recent issue of officer termination, he preferred having this independent outside authority making the decisions, which removed any potential claim of internal conflicts of interest. Chief Wyffels stated it is a good process and when using the Commission as intended and to the fullest extent possible, it has a definite value to the organization.

Chief Wyffels determined that in order to abolish the Commission it requires a unanimous vote of the Council to do so, or it must be put as a referendum on the next ballot for the voters to decide. Chief Wyffels also determined that when the issue came up to the Council in 2007, both council persons Ron Christianson and Jim Dokken voted in favor of keeping the Commission.

After discussion, Commissioner Akerson made a motion to continue with the Rules and Regulations as written, seconded by Commissioner Schwantes. **Motion carried.**

Chief Wyffels then updated the Commission on department personnel. He advised the Commission that Officer Dorn had filed a grievance regarding her termination from the Police Department. He explained the various steps of the grievance process that must be followed. City Administrator Stevens explained that she does not want to fill Officer Dorn's position until the process is complete.

Chief Wyffels informed the Commission that he had turned in his resignation letter, with his resignation being effective May 31, 2014. Sgt. Asmus will also be retiring the same day and has submitted a letter of resignation as well. With the absence of Officer Dorn, the Police Department will be down three positions at that time. This results in an extensive loss of knowledge/experience.

Chief Wyffels stated that the Sheriff's Department is losing four officers in 2014, with all leaving on May 31<sup>st</sup> as well. The Sheriff's Department has already completed the testing/hiring process, so the police department would not be competing against them for candidates. It is Chief Wyffels' recommendation to begin the hiring process for all of the positions, as it is a long process with testing, certifying a list, etc. The Commission also felt it was important to begin the hiring process right away. The Chief will need approval from the City Administrator to do this.

Discussion followed on what the process would be for hiring a new police chief. Chief Wyffels explained that a police department must have a named CLEO (Chief Law Enforcement Officer) and that someone could be appointed "acting chief" in the interim. City Administrator Stevens said it would be her recommendation to open up the testing process in order to seek the best candidate both in-house and outside the city. She explained that the Commission would certify a list, she would conduct interviews with Council members and the City Council would have to approve the candidate since it's a Department Head position.

### Miscellaneous

Commissioner Schwantes thanked Chief Wyffels for his outstanding leadership and expressed that he would be sorely missed. The Chief informed the Commission that he feels the overall public opinion of the Police Department is positive, as he receives letters from citizens quite often commending officers for their professionalism.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Schwantes, seconded by Commissioner Akerson. Meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

/sae