



**West Plainfield Fire Protection District**  
24901 County Road 95, Davis, CA 95616 (530) 756-0212

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**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS – SPECIAL MEETING**  
**June 12, 2024, at 7:00 PM**

Held in Person at:  
Fire Station  
24905 County Road 95  
Davis, CA 95616

Held by Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/98831083439>  
One tap mobile – +16699006833,98831083439#  
Dial by your location – (669) 900-6833 US (San Jose)  
Meeting ID: 988 3108 3439

Additional (Remote) Location at 2655 Portage Bay E #2, Davis, CA 95616

**1. Call the Meeting to Order and Establish Quorum (President McMullen)**

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by President McMullen

Clerk of the Board, Kytiana Sayer-Peterson, was off on this evening, Fire Chief Rita filling in for Board Clerk called role and confirmed that a quorum was present

Present Were:

Commissioners: James McMullen, Emily Amy, Beth Stiles, and Warren Roos  
Staff: Fire Chief Cherie Rita, Battalion Chief Marc Beoshanz, Firefighter Jon Lee, Captain Patrick Fish, Captain Scott Bravo  
Public: Winters Fire Chief Jack Snyder

VIA Zoom: Firefighter Lopez, Captain Elizabeth Snyder, Dave Bellerive, Assistant Chief Stiles, and Captain Tom Stiles

**2. Public Comment**

Letter submitted by Fire Fighter read by Fire Fighter John Lee and submitted in writing to the Board.

“Dear Members of the West Plainfield Fire District Commission,

As we approach Chief Rita's well-deserved retirement at the end of this year, it marks a pivotal moment of transition within our organization. In light of this, I feel compelled to address a matter of significance regarding the education requirements for the Chief position.

While I recognize the value of the education requirement for the Chief position, I believe it must be supplemented with a consideration of work equivalency. It's essential to acknowledge that some of our esteemed members may not

possess college degrees. Their commitment to their careers, coupled with their demonstrated leadership and expertise, makes them invaluable assets to our organization.

After careful consideration, I am convinced that it is in the best interest of our organization to revisit the education prerequisites for the Chief's position. While formal education undoubtedly brings merit, we must equally value the practical experience and skills that many of our candidates offer.

By revisiting these requirements, we not only widen our pool of potential candidates but also reaffirm our commitment to inclusivity and diversity within our workplace. Every member brings unique strengths to the table, and it's imperative that our leadership selection process reflects this diversity of talent and experience.

I wish to emphasize that my sentiments are shared by numerous members within our association. While I may not represent the entirety of our organization, I can attest to the widespread support for reevaluating these requirements.

Thank you for considering this matter with the attention and gravity it deserves. I am eager to engage in further discussions to explore how we can best move forward in fostering a more inclusive and effective leadership structure within our Fire District.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,  
Jon Lee"

Captain Scott Bravo addressed the board with concerns on procedure regarding recent internal promotions within the West Plainfield Fire Protection District. Captain Bravo has served as a company officer of district since 2018 and deems necessary to bring attention to areas that merit the attention of the board. During the recruitment process for paid Fire Battalion Chief in 2021, Bravo among other candidates had undergone the interview process conducted by the Personnel committee and despite experience, was told that they did not meet the minimum requirements for the role. However, it was later made available that the selected candidate also did not meet certain minimum requirements such as EMT Certification. This discrepancy prompted legitimate questions regarding the selection of a candidate for promotion and the Personnel committee's adherence to the listed minimum requirements. While embarking on the next hiring process Bravo is faced similar concerns. Intention to embark on promotional process is out of interest to contribute to district growth, however, disregard for protocols and failure to address concerns had compromised integrity of process. Captain Bravo expressed disappointment on behalf of himself, Assistant Chief Stiles, and other interested parties. Asked the board to ensure that future processes adhere to high standards of professionalism.

Commissioner Roos addressed Captain Bravos comment and assures that the comment will be addressed during discussion of that item on the agenda. Commissioner Amy

follows inquiring what specific Certifications Captain Bravo felt were missing from the job description?

Captain Bravo replies that it is the expertise and professional assertion of the Personnel committee and the Fire Chiefs/Battalion Chiefs and respectfully is unable to answer.

Battalion Chief Marc Beoshanz sent an email with comments and concerns, present before the board to urge the board to take another look at the process and consider what we have in terms of candidates willing to apply for the position. Battalion Chief Beoshanz believes the board had leeway and as a small district can be flexible to accommodate the volunteers willing to take on the position. Battalion Chief Beoshanz again, urges the board to reconsider and to consider all applicants

Fire Captain Patrick Fish speaks in support of Chief Beoshanz, understanding that there is a time sensitive deadline for a determination, would like to encourage the board to revisit educational requirements for the Fire Chief position. Captain Fish spoke to traditional education, and ascertains it is best to make a selection from those that are qualified to take on the role.

President McMullen calls for additional public comments. With no discussion, President McMullen concludes the public comment period.

**3. Discussion / Action – Review and Potentially Revise Fire Chief Job Description (Commissioner Roos)**

Commissioner Roos began discussion on Job Description by providing context to how the dynamic had changed. The Guidelines are out of date and if it is the vote of the board they can be updated. Commissioner Roos acknowledges the passion of the topics discussion and assures that there is a great value to experiential knowledgeability.

Fire Chief Rita sent an email in April suggesting that the board takes time to review Job Descriptions and hasn't followed up since return. Chief Rita speaks in support of establishing a procedure to review job descriptions before moving forward with promotion/hiring.

Commissioner Stiles speaks in support of readjusting when moving forward with a promotional process, and also asserts that a degree may not be a need for a volunteer Fire Chief position.

Commissioner Amy did not recall email in April from Chief Rita, for tonight had searched job descriptions for other districts, however, most had educational requirements and were paid positions. Commissioner Amy is open to discussion on this but is frustrated as well because of the time spent on the promotional process.

Captain Bravo asks of the board if there are legal ramifications to changing the hiring process during a promotion.

President McMullen replies that the board is speaking this evening only of the Job Description.

Firefighter Jon Lee asked the board if the job position opening has closed or if it has closed to receive applicants, Fire Chief Rita confirms that it was closed in June. Firefighter Lee continues that from what he knows is that once a position stops taking applicants that the promotional/hiring process has officially begun.

Commissioner Amy clarified that there may need to be changes to the hiring process if the job description is changed.

Modification proposed by Commissioner Amy : “Fifteen years of Fire department operation suppression and training experience, including five years with experience at the rank of Captain or greater and associates degree at an accredited association, bachelors or master's degree at accredited institution is preferred. Excelled experience with more than Thirty-Five years' experience in the fire service may override education requirement with a high school diploma. Fire Officer/Chief Officer certification issued by the State Fire Marshall is also required.”

Commissioner Roos asked if the thirty-five years of experience is necessitated to override educational requirements. Additionally, Chief Rita states that for State Certification a degree is a minimum requirement to get certification.

Commissioner Stiles spoke in favor of 15 years of experience to override qualifications. Captain Bravo spoke in agreement with Commissioner Stiles and suggested a 2:1 ratio of experiential knowledge to education as a Thirty Five year requirement for experience is too much.

Fire Chief Rita states that because the Certification requires a degree, that it should be reduced to requiring completion of the classes or removed to prevent the additional educational barrier.

Commissioner Amy proposes revised modifications: “Ten years of Fire department operation suppression and training experience, including five years with experience at the rank of Captain or greater, and associates degree at an accredited institution, bachelor's or master's degree at accredited institution is preferred. Excelled experience with more than Twenty years' experience in the fire service may override education requirement with a high school diploma. Fire Officer/Chief Officer certification issued by the California State Fire Marshall is desired.”

Commissioner Stiles commented on the proposed modifications, spoke in support of the modifications, however, asserted that Twenty years is still too long of an experience to require to override educational requirements. Commissioner Stiles recommended 15 years as a more reasonable term. Commissioner Amy spoke from concern that educational requirements were being removed that made a candidate more well-rounded.

Commissioner Stiles asked Winters Fire Chief Jack Snyder to share background which included degree, training and certification courses, as well as over 20 years of experience for his paid Chief position.

Firefighter Lee inquired of Commissioner Amy to restate the modifications. Commissioner Amy clarified that the 20 years of experience would not be in addition to earlier

requirement, it is to replace or override qualifications. Firefighter Lee thanks Commissioner Amy for clarifying

Fire Chief Rita asked Commissioner Amy how to quantify the excelled experience. Commissioner Amy replied that it would mean the candidate has been recognized for their achievements. Fire Chief Rita spoke in support of delaying modifications to not rush through the process and identify quantifiable and measurable qualifications.

Commissioner Roos asked if the board took no action to change at this time, that the board could waiver candidates that do not meet qualifications.

Captain Bravo states that this is embarrassing because these items should have been addressed by the board prior to beginning and making changes now can exclude candidates that are in the process.

Battalion Chief Marc Beoshanz spoke to the board that he appreciates Commissioner Amy's revisions and speaks in favor of the rewording giving the board leeway and thinks that it will speak well to knowledgeability of the candidates.

Commissioner Roos advocates for the board in response to Captain Bravos statement in that they are not all subject matter experts on the process and are volunteer board members who care about executing the promotion process appropriately.

Motion is restated:

Motion: Approve modifications to section 790.06 Training and Education Experience with the following language "Ten years of Fire department operation suppression and training experience, including five years with experience at the rank of Captain or greater, and associates degree at an accredited institution, bachelor's or master's degree at accredited institution is preferred. Excelled experience with more than Twenty years' experience in the fire service may override education requirement with a high school diploma. Fire Officer/Chief Officer certification issued by the California State Fire Marshall is desired."

By: Commissioner Roos

Second: Commissioner Stiles

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Amy follows that essential functions must be included within the Job Description as an ADA requirement to modify job descriptions. Chief Rita inquires if that requirement addresses essential functions or physical duties. Commissioner Amy clarifies that it refers to tasks or duties that must be met to complete work assigned.

Motion: Approve modification to section 790.03 from "Typical Tasks" to "Essential Functions"

By: Commissioner Amy

Second: Commissioner Roos

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Amy asked if there are specific certifications that should be included in Job Description. Captain Bravo addresses the board recommending that the Personnel Committee is convened to determine these items as opposed to on an evening Board meeting. Commissioner Amy asserted that she is asking the room what certifications may be needed because, as a board member and personnel committee member, she is unsure of what would be required and doesn't have the background knowledge or prior statements/information from the staff.

Fire Chief Rita brings to the attention of the board Winters Fire Chief Jack Snyder's job description including following Certifications/Licenses: California Drivers License, Firefighter 1&2, Chief Officer Certification provided by the California State Fire Marshall is also required, Current EMT and CPR certifications.

Commissioner Amy asks if requirements for positions below Fire Chief build incrementally between the positions. Chief Rita states that it is not specifically listed for the fire Chief position but has been the case for other positions.

Commissioner Roos asks if it may be possible to move forward as is or is it necessary to get details now. Chief Rita advises deeper diving into everything during committee meetings.

President McMullen determined that the details of certifications can be deferred to committee meeting and asks if there are commissioners interested in an Ad Hoc Committee to make draft revisions. Captain Bravo indicated interest in joining the committee meeting as Staff. Commissioner Roos indicated interest in joining Ad Hoc committee as chair. Commissioner Amy is happy to share job descriptions with the committee. Commissioner Stiles volunteered to join Ad Hoc Committee.

Ad Hoc Committee convened to review details of Fire Chief Job Description with Chair, Commissioner Roos, Member, Commissioner Stiles, and staff support of Captain Bravo.

**4. Discussion / Action – Review Timeline and Potentially Re-Open Promotional Opportunity Regarding Upcoming Open Volunteer Fire Chief Position (President McMullen)**

Commissioner Amy began discussion and asserted that whenever criteria for promotion or hire are changed, you need to start search over again. Recommended that board cancel interviews scheduled and collect additional materials from candidate but will need to start over again.

Fire Chief Rita asks of commissioner Amy what the basis of process is to stop the current process. Commissioner Amy replies that the board needs to allow candidate to apply for review with the new criteria for the posting, further that it is not ethical to change promotional process mid-course without allowing other candidates and existing to resubmit materials for consideration.

Commissioner Stiles deliberated that If the Ad Hoc Meeting happens to address certifications, they will not be able to do so to be posted and in use within submission and interview time period.

Commissioner Amy proposed allowing candidates to submit and collect materials through early June 19<sup>th</sup> where Personnel committee can meet and make a determination going into interview period.

Captain Bravo speaks in opposition to changing process as it has disrespected excluded and included candidate prospects and questions if the district is protected if there are ramifications from the flawed process.

President McMullen comments that all that has been changed in the meeting is content for the Job Description and restates options before the board to either keep current deadline or extend and cancel current process and restart. Legality concerns can be brought to Yolo County Counsel.

Commissioner Stiles speaks in support of re-inviting candidates to apply/re-apply as long as there is an agreed upon meeting on June 19<sup>th</sup> and if not the 19<sup>th</sup> then the process should be put on hold.

Commissioner Amy asks the board when may be reasonable to ask for materials in order to distribute 360 or reschedule interviews.

Commissioner Stiles proposes relisting position for 1 week and estimate 2 weeks for 360 review receipt and should aim to schedule interviews for end of July. Commissioner Amy proposes to reschedule current process.

Motion: Republish position requesting submission of current resumes and documentation for June 19<sup>th</sup>.


- 5. Next regular Board meeting on June 24, 2024, unless another date is agreed upon**  
Proposed Next meeting Date as June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024. President McMullen will be unavailable.  
Approved by consensus.

**6. Meeting Adjourned (President McMullen)**

Motion: Adjourn Meeting  
By: Commissioner Roos  
Second: Commissioner Stiles  
Discussion: No Discussion  
Motion carries unanimously

Minutes approved: June 25, 2024

  
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JAMES McMULLEN  
President / Commissioner

  
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CHERIE RITA, Interim Board Clerk  
(signed October 23, 2024)