

# Police and Fire Commission Meeting

March 1, 2022

6:00 PM

River Falls City Hall  
Training Room  
222 Lewis Street  
River Falls, WI

**Police**

**Fire**

**POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION MEETING**  
**March 1, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.**  
**City Hall Training Room**

*\*\*Please note that due to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, some or all members of this governing body may attend via telephone or internet. The City Hall Training Room will be open to the public. To access, use the lower-level doors.*

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***NOTE: OFFICIAL ACTION MAY BE TAKEN ON ANY AGENDA ITEM***

**Agenda**

Call Meeting to Order

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes: August 23, 2021 Regular Meeting

**Police Department**

- 1) Establish Patrol Officer Eligibility List

**Fire Department**

- 1) Fire Chief Hiring Process Discussion
- 2) Appointment of Acting Fire Chief

**Adjournment**

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***Posted: February 25, 2022***

***Updated: February 28, 2022***

## **POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

**August 23, 2021 @ 5:30 p.m.**

River Falls City Hall  
City Council Chambers  
222 Lewis Street  
River Falls, WI

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Commission Members Present: Mark Sams, Jon Longsdorf, Gary Donath, Dick Rinehart

Absent: Grant Hanson

Staff Present: Gordon Young, Scott Nelson

Police and Fire Commission President Mark Sams called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. The City Council Chambers were open for public to attend.

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes from May 26, 2021

Commission Member Donath recommended a correction to “Commission Member Donath” from “Council Member Donath”.

**MSC Rinehart, Donath to approve the May 26, 2021 Minutes with the suggested correction. Unanimous**

1) Election of President of Police & Fire Commission

President Sams requested nominations.

**MSC Rinehart/Sams to nominate Mark Sams to another term as president of the Police and Fire Commission. UNANIMOUS**

2) Election of Vice President of Police & Fire Commission

President Sams requested nominations. Longsdorf inquired if commission member must be present to be nominated and was advised they did not.

**MSC Longsdorf/Donath to nominate Grant Hanson to another term as vice-president of the Police and Fire Commission. UNANIMOUS**

3) **Authorization to end current Police Officer Eligibility List**

Chief Young explained the current list contained nine candidates. We hired four candidates from the list; and were working on hiring a fifth, when that candidate was injured and will have to restart academy in February, if able. Remaining candidates on the list will be contacted to offer them the chance to go through the selection process once again. Chief Young stated he is looking for high quality candidates ready to hit the road and does not want to wait until next May 2022 for a new hire to start.

Chief Young shared that we have an upcoming position to fill with the resignation of Officer Tom Overland, who is going into private industry. He indicated this is a trend in law enforcement.

Chief Young stated decertifying the current list will give the opportunity for more qualified applicants to apply. The hiring process will begin in September or early October, and he looks forward to coming back to the commission with a new eligibility list, should the Commission authorize that direction.

Rinehart commented that this plan of action sounded good. Longsdorf asked if party of the decertifying and creating a new list is about trying to get higher score than those remaining on the list. Chief Young stated yes, we are looking for the highest quality applicants.

Donath asked about the application process, Chief Young shared that the steps would follow the hiring process completed earlier this year.

**MSC Longsdorf, Rinehart to end current Police Officer Eligibility List. UNANIMOUS**

4) Authorization to create a new Police Officer Eligibility List

Sams asked if there was any discussion, there was none.

**MSC Donath/Longsdorf to authorize the creation of a new Police Officer Eligibility List. UNANIMOUS**

5) Duties of Police and Fire Commission Presentation by Chief Young

Chief Young provided commission members a copy of the City of River Falls Police and Fire Commission Police Department Rules of Procedure approved September 13, 2019. Young provided a review of the hiring processes and synopsis of open meeting law, as shown through a PowerPoint presentation. The City Administrator has asked any board or commission be given a refresher on duties and purpose.

Chief Young shared that at the next meeting he will bring forth a change to the rules of procedure regarding sergeant requirements to fall in line with the verbiage in the union contract.

Rinehart comment that the training with the attorney was very helpful two years ago.

Donath asked for clarification with open meeting law. Chief Young gave an overview and reminded commission members to be aware of the open meeting law when in public and when replying to e-mails.

Rinehart asked about volunteers for fire department staffing. Chief Nelson replied that everyone is engaged, and the staff wants to do things. The new method of operation created by the department staff is working very well. He reminded the Commission that the volunteer force re-applies every three years for positions within the department.

Adjournment: **MSC Rinehart/Donath.** Unanimous. Meeting adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ailene Splittgerber  
Recording Secretary



**RIVER FALLS  
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**Office of the Chief of Police**  
125 East Elm Street  
River Falls, WI 54022  
715.425.0909

**To:** Police & Fire Commissioners  
**From:** Gordon Young, Chief of Police  
**Date:** February 25, 2022  
**Re:** Patrol Officer Eligibility List

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After conducting the physical agility test, written examination, and oral board interviews, the following applicants scored above 70% and meet the Police & Fire Commission rules for the eligibility list:

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Oral Interview Raw Score</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Veteran's Preference Pts</b>	<b>Total w/Vet Pts</b>	<b>Law Enforcement Certification</b>
Adam Amaro	310	77.5	10	87.5	Certifiable
Maverick Deschamp	314	78.5	n/a	78.5	Not Certified
Colin Fluno	307	76.5	n/a	76.5	Certifiable
Janari Glover	298	74.5	n/a	74.5	Not Certified
Paige Harlow	292	73	n/a	73	Not Certified

The police department currently has four (4) vacant positions. Upon the Commissioners approving this eligibility list, our staff will begin a background investigation into each candidate and report back to you my recommendations for hire.

Scott Nelson  
N1333 717<sup>th</sup> St.  
Bay City, WI 54723

February 9, 2022

Mayor Dan Toland  
City of River Falls  
222 N Lewis St.  
River Falls, WI 54022

Dear Mayor Toland:

Please consider this formal notice of my intention to retire from my position as Fire Chief for the City of River Falls. My last day will be Monday, May 2, 2022. I plan on beginning my retirement on Tuesday, May 3, 2022.

I have been your Fire Chief for over 11 years, during which time I have had many enriching and rewarding experiences. I would like to thank you and the Council, the Police and Fire Commission, all the City employees and the Community for the support they have given me throughout the years. Most importantly, I am grateful for having the honor of being allowed to lead such an amazing group of dedicated firefighters.

During the last several months, I have been preparing the department for my intended departure. While there are several items still on our plate, I feel we can accomplish them by my retirement date, helping provide a smooth transition for the new Chief.

Thank you very much for the great memories. I look forward to watching the River Falls Fire Department rise to the next level of professionalism under new leadership.

It's been an honor.

Regards,



Scott Nelson  
Fire Chief, City of River Falls

cc: City Council  
Police & Fire Commission  
Scot Simpson, City Administrator  
Jason Stroud, Assistant City Administrator  
Human Resources



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Police and Fire Commission

**FROM:** Jason Stroud, Assistant City Administrator

**DATE:** March 1, 2022

**TITLE:** Fire Chief Recruitment

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### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Authorize City staff to conduct a fire chief recruitment consistent with the terms of this memorandum.

### BACKGROUND

The current fire chief, Scott Nelson, has submitted his notification of retirement to be effective on Monday, May 2, 2022. The rules and considerations to be included in the recruitment and selection of a fire chief are provided in the River Falls Police & Fire Commission's rules of procedure.

### DISCUSSION

The Human Resources Director and the Assistant City Administrator have reviewed the Commission's rules of procedure and have developed a proposed recruitment procedure that is consistent with these rules. In addition, the Assistant City Administrator has met with the fire department's Chief Advisory Committee to gain initial feedback on the updated Chief's job description and the recruitment strategy.

The following are the recommendations for the Commission's consideration:

- Designate a Commission representative to be the day-to-day liaison to City staff during this recruitment period.
- Authorize staff to partner with the recruitment firm of Gov HR USA for assistance. The cost for their assistance is \$9,000, this will provide the following: development of position announcement, nationwide advertising, screening of candidates against a qualification(s) matrix and submittal of top tier candidates. This procurement of these professional services is allowable in accordance with the city's purchasing policy.
  - Staff obtained pricing from other firms (Baker Tilly, SGR, DDA) and found them to be non-responsive, not interested, and/or cost prohibitive.
- Authorize staff to plan an interview and assessment process for the selection of the next Chief that will include the following: initial virtual screening, dual panel interviews, presentation assessment and meet-and-greet.

- Panel representation will include: Police & Fire Commission rep(s), Mayor, City Administrator, Assistant City Administrator, HR Director, Police Chief, Community Development Director, local business representative, Fire Department Chief's Advisory Committee member(s), and a Fire Chief from a similar locality/department.

## **CONCLUSION**

It will be staff's intent to keep the members of the Police & Fire Commission informed and involved throughout the process. Staff would present a final candidate to the commission for formal approval.

Enc:

Updated Fire Chief Job Description

Cc:

Mayor Dan Toland

City Administrator Scot Simpson

HR Director Karen Bergstrom

Police Chief Gordon Young

CITY OF RIVER FALLS, WI  
JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: **FIRE CHIEF**

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Department: Fire  
FLSA: Exempt

Reports to: Police and Fire Commission  
Date: June 1, 2022

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**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this position is to lead, direct and supervise the administration, operations, and personnel of the River Falls Fire Department. The fire chief is a deputy emergency government director for the city. The work is performed in coordination with the City Administrator, or his designee, with statutory oversight from the Police & Fire Commission.

The fire chief will be a collaborative leader who can connect, and work with, city staff, the community and the volunteer members of the department. The fire chief will support, and model, the city's values, priorities, and commitments. The fire chief will continuously demonstrate interpersonal skills, integrity, confidentiality, and judgment that inspires trust, creates vision, executes strategy, improves efficiencies, and influences inclusivity amongst all members and employees.

**ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS**

- Work with the City Administrator and other staff to determine goals and priorities. Stay abreast of City needs and encourage input/ideas from all personnel.
- Direct the development of department procedures and regulations to accomplish goals and priorities most effectively.
- Responsible for the overall direction, coordination, and evaluation of departmental personnel. Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring, and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; appraising and recognizing performance; holding members accountable to policies and conduct standards; addressing complaints and resolving problems.
- Directly supervises department command personnel including Division Chiefs, and other assigned personnel. Indirectly supervises all department personnel through the chain-of-command.
- Partners with human resources to ensure efforts to recruit and retain a diverse and qualified workforce.
- Directs and oversees all department operations; establishes operating guidelines, policies and procedures for the department for incident response; develops and monitors department budget and oversees expenditures.
- Responds to incidents as needed to support operations and may assume command of the scene.

## City of River Falls

### Fire Chief

#### Page 2

- Responsible for developing and maintaining department policies and for making recommendations to upgrade the department By-Laws, Standard Operating Guidelines and Administrative Regulations.
- Responsible for performing and enforcing all fire prevention ordinances of the City and State laws and regulations pertaining to fire prevention. Is responsible for keeping the public informed on fire prevention methods and on the activities of the Department.
- Coordinates with the Building Inspection Department; takes an active role in site and plan review.
- Oversees the development, implementation and presentations of the fire prevention programs.
- Assists other departments in establishing safety and emergency procedures.
- Attends all necessary meetings as directed by the Police & Fire Commission and City Administrator. May include City Council, rural association, county meetings, state meetings, etc.
- Participates in local, regional, state and national conferences and seminars on fire administration, prevention, public education, and suppression to maintain a continuing level of professional and technical competence.
- Oversees and manages the department training programs for personnel in firefighting methods, rescue, first responder response, hazardous materials response, inspections, investigation, use of equipment, re-certification and all others as needed.
- Develops capital equipment purchase recommendations; follows all city procurement policies to oversee specification development for purchases of vehicles and equipment; meets with vendors and recommends purchases; oversees the maintenance of facilities, vehicles, and equipment. Reviews maintenance reports.
- Reviews incident reports; prepares a variety of reports and correspondence; compiles data for State reporting system for fire responses; approves payroll and monthly activity reports.
- Responsible for pursuing and securing grants and outside funding for the department.
- Maintains current knowledge of firefighting/emergency response/hazardous materials methods and technology.
- Maintains an awareness of upcoming community events.
- Study the growth of the fire district and make recommendations for expansion and improvement of firefighting personnel, water supply, vehicles and equipment.
- Develop long range plans for the training, operations, personnel, equipment, and facility requirements of the department.
- Perform all duties and responsibilities in Wisconsin State Statutes, Wisconsin Administrative Code, River Falls City Ordinances, River Falls Fire Department Standard Operating Guidelines and River Falls Fire Department Administrative Regulations.
- Ability to communicate orally and in writing with the City Administrator, Mayor, City Council, Police and Fire Commission, Rural Fire Association, University of Wisconsin – River Falls, other city and regional departments, all department personnel and the public.
- Other duties as assigned.

**KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES**

- Comprehensive knowledge of modern fire services, including the areas of suppression, community risk reduction, special operations, information management and administration.
- Able to work in high stress situations and maintain a professional calm demeanor.
- Knowledge of Local, State and Federal laws, regulations and codes relating to the fire service.
- Thorough understanding of technology and systems related to the fire service.
- Exhibit a leadership style characterized by collaboration and the ability to involve fire department members in the decision-making process.
- Possess unquestioned honesty and integrity and a high sense of personal and professional ethics.
- Positive leader who identifies and develops division talent and recognizes the achievements of department personnel.
- Express oneself clearly and concisely, both orally and in writing.
- Good public speaker capable of projecting a positive image of the fire department and the city.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with a wide variety of city personnel and the public.
- Effectively manage the department and budgets
- Knowledge of volunteer recruitment and retention practices.
- Evaluate issues from a broader, city-wide perspective
- Build partnerships with other City departments, governmental units, regional departments, private businesses, and citizens.
- Maintain flexible working hours which may include evening or weekend meetings/events.

**QUALIFICATIONS**

**Minimum:**

- Bachelor's degree in a related field.
- A minimum of ten (10) years of firefighting experience of which five years are fire command as a Captain/Battalion Chief or above; or any combination of education and experience that provides equivalent knowledge, skills and abilities.
- Position requires: State of Wisconsin Firefighter II certification or equivalent, Hazardous Materials Operations certification, National Incident Management System (NIMS) compliance
- State of Wisconsin Fire Inspector certification or equivalent is required within one year of hire.
- Valid driver's license

**Preferred:**

- Master's Degree in a related field.
- First Responder or EMT certification
- Completion of advanced fire tactics and officer trainings and certifications.
- National Fire Academy Managing Officer or Executive Fire Officer (EFO)
- Experience as a volunteer firefighter and/or working with volunteers.

**RESIDENCY**

The Fire Chief will be expected to reside within 15 miles of the fire department's response area within one year of appointment.

**WORKING CONDITIONS**

While performing duties of this job, the employee occasionally may work in outside weather conditions with exposure to wet and/or humid conditions, extreme cold and heat. The noise level in the work environment is usually at the normal communication level.

While performing duties of this position, functions would require:

- Sitting at a desk for periods of time, stand and walk.
- Required to use hands to finger, handle or feel objects or equipment and to talk and hear.
- Regularly lift and/or move up to 25 pounds
- Occasionally lift and/or move up to 50 pounds
- Work with the public that may be angry or upset
- Required to climb and descend stairs
- Have a full range of motion, physical strength, endurance, balance, fitness and condition to fulfill the essential functions, which includes the ability to meet all minimum departmental physical requirements for firefighter.
- Ability to move, pull or drag a person to safety in imminent danger; to protect oneself and others.

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.