

# Police and Fire Commission Meeting

June 27, 2022

6:00 PM

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

Police

Fire

**POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION MEETING**  
**June 27, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.**  
**City Council Chambers**  
**222 Lewis Street**  
**River Falls, WI 54022**

*\*\*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 Council Chambers 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: April 13, 2022 Regular Meeting

**Fire Department**

- 1) Appointment of Steven Cash to Fire Chief of the River Falls Fire Department

**Adjournment**

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***Posted: June 17, 2022***

*Council members may be in attendance for informational purposes only.  
No official Council action will be taken.*

**NOTE:** Any person who has a qualifying disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act that requires the meeting or materials to be in an accessible location or format, may contact City Clerk Amy White at (715) 426-3408 or in person at 222 Lewis Street, for accommodations. Requests for accommodations should be made at least three (3) business days in advance of the meeting. Every effort will be made to arrange accommodations.

## POLICE & FIRE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

April 13, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m.

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

Meeting called to order at 6 p.m.

Commission Members Present: Mark Sams, Jon Longsdorf, Gary Donath,  
Grant Hanson (Virtual), Dick Rinehart

Staff Present: Jason Stroud, Gordon Young,  
Sterling Hackney, Jon Smits

Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting Minutes from March 1, 2022.

**MSC Donath/Rinehart Unanimous.**

- 1) Election of President of Police & Fire Commission
- 2) Election of Vice President of Police & Fire Commission  
Sams asked for nominations for the role of President of the Police and Fire Commission. Rinehart made motion to have exiting officers (President Sams and Vice President Hanson) continue in their roles for another year.

**MSC Rinehart/Donath to re-elect president Mark Sams and Vice President Grant Hanson the Police and Fire Commission. Unanimous.**

- 3) Fire Chief Hiring Process Update  
Jason Stroud provided an update on the hiring process so far. Of the 17 applications received, eight applicants meet the full qualifications of the job. Virtual interviews will be held on April 19 with the qualified candidates. Commissioner Donath will represent the commission and Interim Fire Chief Foley will also participate. On-site panel interviews and exercise will be held on May 11 with the approximate one to three selected to continue. Panel will include various representatives from local business community, fire department, city administration, senior city staff, as well as the Police and Fire Commission, by way of Commissioner Donath. Upon conclusion of the process, the hope is to have a well-qualified candidate to present to the Commission for consideration of appointment as Fire Chief.

Rinehart asks for target date to bring someone aboard, Stroud stated realistically it may be around July 1, although it may be sooner or later, depending on if someone must relocate here.

Stroud also invited the Police and Fire Commission members to the informal open house retirement celebration for Scott Nelson on Tuesday 4/26 from 3-5 PM in the City Hall Training Room, the Mayor will do an official recognition at city council that evening.

4) Modification to Patrol Officer Eligibility List

Chief Young thanked the Commission for meeting again. He stated he was happy to have candidates to bring before the commission. He reiterated that he would only bring qualified applicants that he believes will represent the city well. Young stated there is an additional candidate, who, after testing and interviews, scored highest on the list. Young requested the Commission to approve the updated eligibly list, with Allison Weaver at the top of the list.

**MSC Rinehart/Donath to add Allison Weaver to the updated eligibility list. Unanimous.**

5) Appointments from Patrol Officer Eligibility List

Young asked the Commission to approve Allison Weaver, Adam Amaro, Colin Fluno and Paige Harlow to the position of police officer. Young provided background information on the four candidates he is requesting to hire.

Once candidates have been appointed, they must pass conditional offer of employment, upon meeting those criteria, they will begin field training, Weaver and Amaro will take the reciprocity test within a year; Fluno and Harlow will need to successfully complete Wisconsin basic recruit academy for certification.

Commissioner Longsdorf requested clarification on the training period. Young explained academy is 720 hours. Once back from academy, officers begin approximately 17 weeks of field training, and then a year-long probation period.

Rinehart asked several clarifying questions about the academy. Young explained the officers are paid as employees during training and the department pays for the schooling but gets reimbursed from the state. If they can attend academy in Eau Claire, they would have to commute back and forth daily, as we are within their milage range, so are not eligible for reimbursement of room and board. The department would cover lunches during the training. The training is a full-time training, five days a week and officers are expected to study and prepare for the physical requirements when outside of the classroom.

**MSC Rinehart/Donath to approve the hire of four individuals discussed from the list. Unanimous.**

6) Review of Police and Fire Commission Duties

Chief Young provided the annual presentation of the duties of the Police and Fire Commission.

He provided an update on the four new officers, hired last summer, as well as the 2021 Firefighter of the Year and 2021 Officer of the year. Commissioners will be invited to the city council meeting, possibly in May, when the officer of the year presentation will be held.

Young reviewed the statutes establishing the Police and Fire Commission, as well as an overview of powers and duties of commission authority, hiring processes and open meeting laws.

When discussing the police sergeant promotion, Young stated there has been a contract change so the current Procedures for the commission will need to be updated to align with contract. That change be on an upcoming agenda.

When reviewing Police Officer Hiring, Young provided more details regarding the physical fitness evaluation during the exam and for our department.

Donath asked about the overall moral of the police force. Young stated we much better than we were a year ago. We never lost support locally, although the reports on national media are upsetting. Local support has been tremendous, from citizens, to City Council, the City Administrator and Assistant City Administrator showing support matters. The concern was obvious in the last recruiting process. Young stated to have no one meeting our standards in the last process was unheard of in his time with the department. He expressed he is thankful we were able to get qualified candidates this time around.

Adjournment: **MSC** Rinehart/Longsdorf. unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ailene Splittgerber  
Recording Secretary



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Police and Fire Commission

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

**DATE:** June 16, 2022

**TITLE:** **Fire Chief Appointment**

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### RECOMMENDED ACTION

Appoint Steven Cash to the position of Fire Chief for the City of River Falls.

### BACKGROUND

The City has conducted a recruitment for the fire chief position due to the retirement of the previous chief. Seventeen applications were received, of which ten were selected to be interviewed. After initial virtual interviews, three candidates were selected to meet with panels consisting of representatives from the fire department, the city organization, the Commission, the City Council and the community.

Steven Cash interviewed with the panel on June 14, 2022. The Fire Department Chief's Advisory Committee was also invited to observe the panel interview and participated in providing feedback to the panel. The panel identified some follow-up questions to be asked of Mr. Cash during the discussion that ensued after the interview. The consensus of the panel, and Chief's Advisory Committee, was that a recommendation should be made to the Commission to appoint Mr. Cash, so long as staff and the Interim Chief Foley were satisfied with the follow-up conversation with the candidate.

### DISCUSSION

Interim Chief Foley and Asst. City Administrator Stroud met virtually with Mr. Cash on June 15, 2022 to follow up to the panel interview. Both Foley and Stroud were satisfied with the conversation.

Mr. Cash's skills, experiences, and education qualify him to be the fire chief for the City of River Falls. The resume for Mr. Cash is included with this memorandum for the Commission's reference.

### CONCLUSION

The Commission's appointment of Mr. Steven Cash to the Fire Chief position will authorize staff to execute a complete job offer for his hiring.

# STEVEN J. CASH

N7323 County Road XX ♦ Holmen, WI 54636 ♦ (608) 397-4184

E-Mail: [fyrefyterq@gmail.com](mailto:fyrefyterq@gmail.com)

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## Summary of Qualifications:

- 22 years of experience in the fire service with seven years in community risk management.
- Managed and supervised the Community Risk Management Division with a divisional budget of over 1.1 million dollars.
- Developed departmentwide performance improvements through data analytics acting as the department's accreditation manager.
- Expanded community outreach programs to underserved demographics based upon an internally conducted community risk assessment.
- Bachelor's Degree in Fire Administration from Columbia Southern University.
- Certified fire and explosion investigator through the International Association of Arson Investigators and National Association of Fire Investigators.

## Professional Experience:

04/2004 – Present      City of La Crosse Fire Department      La Crosse, WI

### ***Assistant Chief of Community Risk Management***

Primary duties include:

- Performing senior administrative duties and tasks including, but not limited to, command coordination, planning, staffing, program development, and budgeting.
  - Acts as a divisional "Second in Command" of the La Crosse Fire Department and keeps the Fire Chief informed of all operational activities on a day-to-day basis.
  - Overseeing the department's accreditation process.
  - Performing data analysis and evaluates the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery methods and procedures; assesses and monitors workloads, administrative and support systems, and internal reporting relationships; identifies opportunities for improvement and reviews with the Fire Chief; implements improvements.
  - Interprets and implements quality assurance standards to ensure quality care to customers; reviews CQI standards, studies existing policies and procedures, and interviews internal and external stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of the CQI program.
  - Serving as Fire Marshal and overseeing department personnel conducting fire investigations, fire inspections, and building pre-fire planning.
  - Developing and writing policies and procedures for the organization.
  - Supervising the City's Building Inspectors and Code Enforcement personnel and activities.
  - Developing, implementing, and managing programs in the areas of community risk reduction; fire prevention; building and property code inspection and enforcement; life safety; public education, and emergency management and response.
  - Responding to calls for on-scene investigation of fires and explosions to conduct origin and cause investigations as a Certified Fire Investigator.
  - Examine reports on fires, fire losses, and fire prevention inspections. Prepares reports of facts; identifies, collects, and safeguards evidence; provides court testimony in collaboration with law enforcement and the State Fire Marshal.
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## Professional Experience (Cont.):

- Assisting in grant writing and management for the organization
- Preparing the annual budget related to the Division of Community Risk Management and participating in the forecast of funds needed for staffing, equipment, materials, and supplies; monitors and approves expenditures, prepares specifications, contracts, and bid documents; implements adjustments
- Coordinating the review, revision, and development of ordinances for fire prevention efforts and building/life safety/property code enforcement.
- Overseeing the implementation of various software and technology platforms.
- Assists in the Emergency Management functions for the City including coordination of efforts relating to the preparation, planning, response, and recovery from natural or man-made disasters.
- Responding to significant fires and emergency calls for assistance and may assume the role of Incident Commander, Safety Officer, or other NIMS incident command positions at complex or multi-company incidents.

01/2006 – 7/2015      Western Technical College      La Crosse, WI

### ***Adjunct Instructor- EMS/ Fire Program***

Primary duties include:

- Instructing and evaluating students in the EMS, First Responder, and Fire Protection programs both for credit and non-credit courses which meet industry standards and best practices.
- Developing lesson plans for different fire and EMS-related classes.
- Teaching classes for the State of Wisconsin Firefighter I and II, Fire Officer I and II, Emergency Services Instructor, and Fire Inspector I programs; EMT initial and refresher classes; and First Responder initial and refresher classes.
- Evaluating student performance, grading tests and assignments, and providing positive and constructive feedback to the students for improvement.
- Act as a proctor for State certification examinations.
- Function as a Wisconsin Fire Service Instructor I and Wisconsin Department of Health Services Instructor II.

01/2000 – 04/2004      Village of Howard Fire Department      Howard, WI

### ***Firefighter/Engineer***

Primary duties include:

- Performing firefighting duties such as, but not limited to, fire suppression, extrication, hazardous materials, ice and water rescue, and technical rescue.
  - Responding to all medical emergency calls within the Village as first responder EMT.
  - Driving and operating all departmental pumping and aerial apparatuses.
  - To make sure that all equipment is working properly and that consumables are properly stocked on the apparatus.
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## Additional Professional Activities:

- Acts as the fire department's Accreditation Manager. Overhauled the department's data capture process to provide for more accurate data analysis and reporting.
- Oversaw the implementation of three new software platforms which greatly improved the department's records management system.
- Oversaw the development and implementation of new community risk reduction programs that targeted never before reached demographics.
- Rebuilt the fire department's Youth Fire Setter Intervention program to include community-wide stakeholders and resources.
- Oversaw the creation of programs that addressed abuses of the 911 system and referrals to appropriate entities.
- Assisted in writing grants that were awarded to the department for the amount of \$222,675.00.
- Oversaw the development and implementation of the City's Emergency Operation and Continuity of Operations Plan.

## Education:

08/2020 – 01/2021 Columbia Southern University Orange Beach, AL

### **Bachelor of Science - Fire Administration/Fire Investigation**

- Graduated Summa Cum Laude with a grade point average of 4.0.
- Took classes that included, but were not limited to, Fire and Emergency Services Administration, Fire Service Personnel Management, Political and Legal Foundations of Fire Protection, Fire Prevention Organization and Management, Community Risk Reduction for Fire and Emergency Services, and Emergency Services Law.

08/2001 - 12/2002 Fox Valley Technical College Appleton, WI

### **Associate Degree - Fire Protection Technician**

- Graduated Phi Theta Kappa with honors, with a grade point average of 3.84
- Educated in but not limited to: firefighting techniques and principles, fire protection systems, building construction, public education and speaking, hazardous materials, fire inspection, and emergency medical services.

01/1999 - 12/2001 Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Green Bay, WI

### **Technical Diploma - Emergency Medical Technician, Basic**

- Educated in but not limited to: First aid, CPR, basic life support, and splinting.
  - Took general education courses needed to fulfill the requirements for the Associate Degree program.
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## **Professional Memberships:**

- Member of the International Association of Arson Investigators
- Member of the National Association of Fire Investigators
- Member of the Wisconsin State Fire Inspectors Association
- District 3 Director for the Wisconsin Chapter 25 of the International Association of Arson Investigators
- Member of the International Association of Fire Chiefs
- Member of the Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs Association
- Member of the National Fire Protection Association

## **Community Involvement:**

- Volunteer with Sleep in Heavenly Peace in the La Crosse Area
- Volunteer with Children's Miracle Network Hospitals in La Crosse

## **Certifications and Licenses:**

- Wisconsin state-certified Firefighter I (A26890)
  - Wisconsin state-certified Firefighter II (B26890)
  - Wisconsin state-certified Fire Inspector I (N26890)
  - Wisconsin state-certified Driver/ Operator (D26890)
  - Wisconsin state-certified Emergency Services Instructor I (F26890)
  - Wisconsin state-certified Fire Officer I (J26890)
  - Wisconsin state-certified Fire Officer II (K26890)
  - Nationally Registered EMT (B1758917)
  - Wisconsin State Licensed EMT-Basic (304426)
  - Wisconsin DHS Licensed Instructor I (IN130630-304426)
  - Wisconsin DHS Licensed Instructor II (IC1500152-304426)
  - International Association of Arson Investigators- Certified Fire Investigator (25-121852)
  - Wisconsin state certified Tank Inspector (467311)
  - Wisconsin State Licensed Fire Detection, Prevention and Suppression Inspector (1379055)
  - National Association of Fire Investigators- Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator (24915)
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