

**PIKE TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT  
MERIT COMMISSION  
4881 WEST 71ST STREET  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46268**

**President:**

Stephen Buschmann

**Vice President:**

NaTrina DeBow

**Secretary:**

Russell Sipes

**Members:**

Steve Hendrixson

Nancy Poore

February 19, 2025

**Regular Meeting**

*An Executive Session was held prior to the Regular meeting. No decisions were made during the Executive Session.*

**ATTENDEES:**

Merit Commission – Stephen Buschmann, Russ Sipes, NaTrina DeBow, Steve Hendrixson and Nancy Poore

Pike Township – Chief Mike Goodrich, HRM Jill Smith, Lt. Steve Mills, FF Kevin Bennett, Capt. Ryan Masters, and Div. Chief James Michalisko.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Copies of the January 15, 2025 minutes were distributed for review. There was a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded and approved.

**AGENDA/NEW BUSINESS:**

The meeting was called to order at 1813 hours.

The meeting began with The Pledge of Allegiance.

As noted above, an Executive Session was held prior to the regular meeting to review one applicant for the position of Probationary Firefighter. President Buschmann asked for a motion to approve the following applicants pending approval by INPRS:

Applicant 24-995

Commissioner Poore made the motion. It was seconded by Commissioner Hendrixson and passed unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was the Disciplinary Review. President Buschmann states that he would like to explain what the Merit Commission board is allowed to do per

Indiana Code and the Commission procedures in regards to discipline. For major discipline, which is more than five days suspension, the department refers charges to the commission on a particular firefighter. The commission then holds a full hearing with witnesses and testimony. According to the statute and commission's procedures, the commission will determine that a violation occurred and what the appropriate discipline should be, up to and including termination. For minor infractions, that is 5 days suspension or less, the department can impose that discipline without the commission. If a firefighter wants to appeal, they may do so and the commission will then hold a review hearing. The procedure for a review hearing is basically that the department presents on what discipline they decided and why they decided that way. Then the firefighter presents why they think it should be different and then next the department has a chance to close. The commission can ask questions of anyone present at the meeting. The difference in major charges and minor charges is that the commission can't change the sanction of minor charges. They can only decide whether to affirm the decision of the department or reverse it, like no sanction existed at all. That is the authority the commission has by state statute. Chief Goodrich presented on behalf of Chief Beam, Firefighter Bennett presented his side and then Chief Goodrich closed. The commission asked questions of Division Chief Michalisko and Lt. Steve Mills in reference to the board's decision. President Buschmann asked for vote by hands to uphold Chief's decision. President Buschmann and Commissioner Hendrixson voted to uphold Chief's decision of discipline for FF Bennett. President Buschmann then asked for a vote by hands to reverse the Chief's decision of discipline for FF Bennett. Vice President DeBow, Secretary Sipes and Commissioner Poore voted to reverse the Chief's decision. Per President Buschmann, with a vote of 2 to 3, the Chief's decision is reversed in regards to FF Bennett's discipline and essentially the event did not happen.

There was one employee recommended for promotion from Probationary Captain to Captain. President Buschmann asked for a motion to remove Captain Ryan Masters from probationary Captain status. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

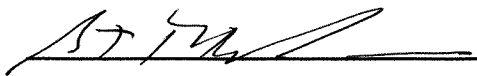
Chief Goodrich requested the first three names from the Captain Promotion eligibility list. President Buschmann asked for a motion to give the Chief the name of Steve Mills, as he is last on the current Captain promotion list. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

#### **MISC. BUSINESS:**

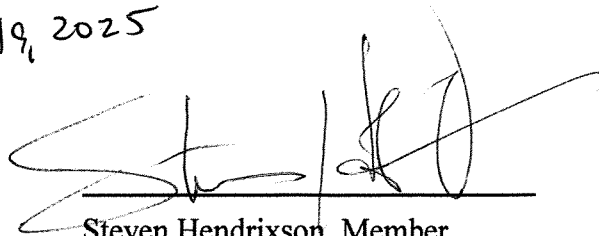
There was no additional business.

The meeting adjourned at 1837 hours.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: February 19, 2025



Stephen Buschmann, President



Steven Hendrixson, Member

absent

Natrina DeBow, Vice President

absent

Nancy Poore, Member



Russell Sipes, Secretary