

PIKE TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT MERIT COMMISSION

**4881 WEST 71ST STREET
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46268**

President: Steve Buschmann
Vice President: NaTrina DeBow
Secretary: Russ Sipes

Members: Steve Hendrixson
Nancy Poore

April 15, 2026
Regular Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Merit Commission –Stephen Buschmann, Nancy Poore, and Russ Sipes.

Pike Township – Chief Jeff Beam, HRM Jill Smith, and Captain Steve Mills

CALL TO ORDER:

At 1803, President Buschmann called the meeting to order. The meeting began with The Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Copies of the March 18, 2026 minutes were distributed for review. President Buschmann asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Secretary Sipes made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Poore and approved by all.

AGENDA/NEW BUSINESS:

Chief Beam stated that he currently has one vacancy in the rank of Lieutenant and another vacancy that is not expected to be filled through the bid system. He requested the next four names from the Lieutenant promotion eligibility list to be used to fill these vacancies. President Buschmann stated that only two names remain on the list that are currently eligible for promotion. He then asked for a motion to present the names of Ja’Michael Hill and Matthew Salmon to the Chief. President Buschmann requested that it be noted in the record that, although Dawson Bowling is the second name on the list, he will not be eligible for promotion until February 17, 2027. The motion was made by Secretary Sipes, seconded by Commissioner Poore, and approved unanimously.

Chief Beam stated that he will promote Ja’Michael Hill to the open Lieutenant position effective May 2, 2026.

Chief Beam next stated that the department maintains certain appointed positions that are eligible for promotion and that personnel changes have occurred within those positions. He requested the

Officer Appointment Information			
Officer Name	Appointing Authority	Term Start Date	Term Expiration Date
Stephen Buschmann	Pike Township Trustee	January 1, 2025	December 31, 2028
NaTrina DeBow	Pike Township Board	January 1, 2023	December 31, 2026
W. Russell Sipes	Pike Township Trustee	January 1, 2023	December 31, 2026
Steve Hendrixson	Pike Township Fire Dept.	January 1, 2025	December 31, 2028
Nancy Poore	Pike Township Fire Dept.	January 1, 2023	December 31, 2026

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next three names from the Captain promotion eligibility list in order to promote the individual(s) first eligible on the list. President Buschmann stated that there are currently only three names eligible for promotion, as the remaining two names on the list will not become eligible until October. He then asked for a motion to present the names of Troy Clements, James Michalisko, and James Boros to the Chief. The motion was made by Secretary Sipes, seconded by Commissioner Poore, and approved unanimously.

Chief Beam stated that all three individuals are serving in promotable positions; therefore, he will promote Troy Clements, James Michalisko, and James Boros to the rank of Captain effective April 16, 2026.

MISC. BUSINESS:

Chief Beam stated that this is a hiring process year. A recruitment committee has been formed to review ways to improve both outreach efforts and candidate screening processes. The committee is not proposing changes to the current scoring matrix as a whole.

Currently, the testing process consists of:

- a written examination, which is pass/fail with a 75% cutoff score;
- a physical fitness evaluation, which accounts for 50% of the total score; and
- a structured interview, which accounts for the remaining 50% of the total score.

The committee is recommending changes within the Physical Fitness Evaluation scoring. At present, the Physical Fitness Evaluation consists of seven components: body composition (10%), flexibility (10%), lower body muscular strength (10%), upper body muscular strength (10%), lower body muscular endurance (10%), upper body muscular endurance (10%), and cardiovascular fitness (40%).

The recruitment committee recommends reducing cardiovascular fitness from 40% to 30%, with the remaining 10% redistributed equally among flexibility, lower body muscular strength, upper body muscular strength, lower body muscular endurance, and upper body muscular endurance, increasing each of those categories from 10% to 12%.

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The committee also recommends changing the lower body muscular strength testing method. Currently, a dynamometer is used; however, it is highly position-dependent and difficult to administer consistently. After researching alternatives, the committee recommends replacing it with a deadlift assessment. This method was adapted from the Army's testing model, which provides an established scoring matrix that the department can use.

President Buschmann stated that he was uncertain whether Commission approval is required for these changes. He will review the relevant statute and Commission rules. If a vote is required, the matter will be added to the next meeting agenda.

President Buschmann also noted that at the last meeting he stated Steve Hendrixson would have served 30 years on the Merit Commission Board. However, during recent research conducted by Chief Beam, it was discovered that Steve Hendrixson actually joined the Commission in January 1989.


No further business from the Chief or Commission or comments from the audience.

ADJOURNMENT:

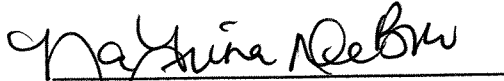
President Buschmann asked for a motion to adjourn meeting at 1819. Secretary Sipes made the motion, Commissioner Poore seconded, and all were in favor.


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APPROVAL OF MINUTES: for April 15, 2026.


Stephen Buschmann, President

absent
Steven Hendrixson, Member


Natrina DeBow, Vice President


Nancy Poore, Member

absent
Russell Sipes, Secretary

Signed May 20, 2026