

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the City Civil Service Commission was held on Friday, January 10, 2025, in the City Council Chamber, 1300 Perdido Street, New Orleans, LA 70112. Ms. Doddie Smith, Personnel Administrator of the Management Services Division called the roll. Present were Vice-Chairperson John Korn, Commissioner Mark Surprenant, and Commissioner Andrew Monteverde. Commissioner Korn convened the meeting at 10:00 a.m. The Commission then proceeded with the docket. At 10:16 a.m. on the motion of Commissioner Surprenant and the second of Commissioner Monteverde, the Commission voted unanimously to go into executive session.

At 10:59 a.m. the Commission completed its executive session and proceeded with the business portion of the meeting.

Item #1 was the minutes for December 13, 2024. Commissioner Surprenant was not present for the December 2024 meeting and was unable to approve the minutes. With only two commissioners remaining, there was no quorum to approve the minutes. Amy Trepagnier, Personnel Director of the Civil Service Department, stated that the item would need to be deferred to the next Commission meeting.

Item #2 was the ratification of Public Integrity Bureau (PIB) extension requests. Commissioner Surprenant moved to approve the extension requests. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Monteverde and approved unanimously.

Item #3a under Rule Amendments was a proposed amendment to Rule II, Sections 4.3 and 4.12 to consolidate appeals of emergency suspensions with the final discipline imposed by the Appointing Authority and to continue appeals of emergency suspensions pending the Appointing Authority's decision on discipline. Christina Carroll, Executive Counsel of the Civil Service Commission, stated that the purpose of the amendment to the rule aims to align the rules with the practice of the Civil Service Department. Specifically, the department's practice is to continue hearings in cases of emergency suspension until the final disciplinary action is imposed, with the intention of consolidating and hearing the matter simultaneously. Feedback from interested parties has been incorporated into the new language of the rule. Notably, the duration of the emergency suspension must be specified, and at

the request of the appellant, appeals of the emergency suspensions and final disciplinary actions may be heard separately for good cause.

Aaron Mischler, President of the New Orleans Fire Fighter Association, addressed the Commission and stated that he requested documentation of what constitutes the authority for an emergency suspension from the Appointing Authority of the Fire Department but had not received it. He expressed concern that, without reference to a disciplinary matrix, emergency suspensions could be unjustly warranted based on arbitrary issues. Amanda Fallis, representing the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), addressed the Commission and stated that AFSCME is amenable to the changes to the proposed changes to the rule previously discussed. She added that AFSCME intends to collaborate with the Commission on the investigation length that employees are subjected to, as it can result in several months of lost pay during an emergency suspension.

William Goforth, Deputy City Attorney, addressed the Commission, responding to comments made by Mr. Mischler and Ms. Fallis. He stated that emergency suspensions are typically applied in cases where termination is the intended final discipline or when there are immediate concerns about an employee's presence in the workplace during an ongoing investigation and pending final disciplinary action. He suggested that the Commission carefully consider defining the term "emergency suspension," as the language may be unintentionally limiting. Commissioner Surprenant moved to approve the proposed amendment. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #3b was a proposed addition of Rule VIII, Section 12 regarding working time for union business. Commissioner Monteverde recused himself. With that recusal, the Commission lost its quorum, and the item was deferred to the next meeting.

Item #3c was an introduction of a proposed amendment to Rule VI, Section 3.5(d) relative to the 45-day limit for the certification of eligibles. Director Trepagnier stated that the rule change comes before the Commission as a suggestion from an employee in the Chief Administrative Office. Currently, when the Civil Service Department provides a list of eligible candidates to non-public safety departments, those departments have a certification window of 45 days. During this 45-day period, a department must conduct interviews, choose candidate(s), conduct background checks and medical evaluations, and allow the employee to give notice to their current employer, if required, before making a hire. The requester has indicated that 45 days is insufficient time and suggested that the rule be amended to allow for an

initial 60-day period to hire candidates from an eligibility list before seeking an administrative request to have the list recertified. Approval of the proposed amendment will be considered at the next meeting.

Item #4a under Classification and Compensation Matters was a request from the Fire Department for an amended Special Rate of Pay for emergency medical certifications for members assigned to the Airport. Commissioner Monteverde recused himself. With there being only two remaining Commissioners, the item was deferred to the next Commission meeting. Mr. Aaron Mischler approached the Commission and stated that the item directly affects the paychecks of firefighters who hold valid Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) licenses, are able to practice because of their license, but aren't being paid EMT rates. Mr. Mischler clarified that the request seeks to provide these firefighters with a special rate of pay for their additional competencies, and requested that, given the absence of a quorum to make a motion on the request, the application of a special rate of pay be made retroactive to when it was initially brought before the Commission. Director Trepagnier stated that the earliest the approved requested can be made effective is at the time of Commission approval. She added that Staff could request that the effective date to be retroactive to the Commission's approval instead of at the time of the City Council's approval when it goes before the City Council. Commissioner Surprenant stated he would be amenable to holding a special meeting to address time-sensitive requests that have been delayed due to a lack of a quorum among the Commission.

Item #4b was a request from the Health Department to create the new job classification of Healthcare for the Homeless Administrator. Mr. Robert Hagmann, Personnel Administrator of the Classification and Compensation Division, stated that this new classification would address the Health Department's need for a dedicated position to oversee the City's Healthcare for The Homeless program. Currently, the Healthcare for The Homeless program is one of the larger initiatives in the Health Department, and the new classification would assist in recruiting and retaining an employee for this role. The position will have a pay grade of 94, with a hiring rate of \$98,795.

Meshawn Siddiq, Deputy Director of the Health Department, approached the Commission to respond to questions asked about the position, as the incumbent would report to her. Commissioner Surprenant moved to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Monteverde and approved unanimously.

Item #4c was a request from the Department of Public Works for a new Traffic Signal job series. Mr. Hagmann stated that Staff was proactive to addressing the City's critical shortage of Traffic Signal Technicians. The outcome was a comprehensive job series of five classifications. The series is designed to have numerous promotional opportunities in an attempt to recruit and retain traffic signal technicians. The hiring rates will range from \$38,433 and \$70,643 annually. Commissioner Monteverde moved to approve the request. Commissioner Surprenant seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #4d was a request from the Office of the Independent Police Monitor for a hiring rate for the classification of Community Police Mediation Program Manager. Mr. Hagmann stated that the request asks for an increase in the hiring rate from \$65,569 to \$79,987. Additional responsibilities have been assigned to the position, such as training additional mediators and overseeing post-investigation mediation programs. Commissioner Korn asked how the position would be financed. Mr. Hagmann responded that the position would be financed through a general fund based on the size of the City's budget. Commissioner Surprenant moved to approve the request. The motion as seconded by Commissioner Monteverde and approved unanimously.

Item #4e was a request from the New Orleans Police Department for a hiring rate for Latent Print Supervisor. Mr. Hagmann stated that the request asks for an increase in the hiring rate from \$87,254 to \$105,126 based on an expansion of responsibilities. The changes would make the Latent Print Supervisor classification equivalent to the Forensic Firearm Examiner Supervisor. The future incumbent would be a mid-level manager overseeing supervisory positions in the Latent Print Division. Commissioner Surprenant moved to approve the request. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #4f was a request from the Department of Safety and Permits to add additional classifications to the list of difficult to fill positions eligible for referral pay and a retroactive application. Director Trepagnier stated that in 2022, the Chief Administrative Office requested the creation of an incentive for employees who recruit new hires into designated difficult-to-fill positions. The Commission approved the request, and the Chief Administrative Office compiled a list of those positions. She further explained that it is a fluid list, as the Commission can add positions in response to the recruiting needs of a department. Thus, the Department of Safety and Permits is requesting that Electrical Inspector Supervisor and Building

Inspector Supervisor be added to that list. Ms. Trepagnier noted that while Staff is in favor of these additions, staff does not recommend approval of the additional request for retroactive referral pay to employees who have recently recruited people for these positions.

Tammie Jackson, Director of Safety and Permits, addressed the Commission and stated that when the request was originally made, and departments were asked to list difficult to fill positions, she and supervisory personnel were under the impression that listing Electrical Inspectors, Mechanical Inspectors, and Building Inspectors would include all classifications in the job series, not just the entry-level classifications. Ms. Jackson explained that her current request is to address this oversight and have the supervisory positions added to the list.

Commissioner Surprenant moved to approve the addition of these classifications to the list of difficult-to-fill positions eligible for referral pay, while denying retroactive referral pay for employees who have recently recruited new hires for these positions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Monteverde and approved unanimously.

Item #5a under Recruitment and Selection Matters was a request for the approval of examination announcements. Commissioner Monteverde moved to approve examination announcements 11210-11214. Commissioner Surprenant seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #5b was a request for approval of provisional appointments in accordance with Rule VI, Section 5.3(a). Director Trepagnier explained that this is a yearly exercise, as Civil Service Rules state that provisional appointments cannot be in existence for longer than a year without Commission approval. Commissioner Monteverde moved to approve the provisional appointments. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Surprenant and approved unanimously.

Item #6 was a request from the Fire Department for sick leave advancement under Rule VIII, Section 2.12 for Fire Recruit Anthony Lalone. Commissioner Monteverde recused himself. With that recusal, the Commission lost its quorum, and the item was deferred to the next meeting.

Item #7 was a request from Senior Police Officer Marylou Agustin to amend the pay cycle for commissioned police employees. Director Trepagnier reminded the Commission that the item was brought to their attention last month for consideration. At the time, the Commission instructed Staff to obtain data regarding the amount of

overtime usage and the potential impact of a change in the pay cycle. Director Trepagnier stated that Staff has not yet received the data and suggested that the item be deferred until the information can be considered in their decision-making process. The Commission agreed and the item was deferred to the next Commission meeting.

Item #8 was a request from Dartagnan Howard for back pay, emergency pay and/or hazard pay under Rule IV, Section 11.1. Mr. Howard requested backpay for emergency pay and/or Hazard pay based on the City's emergency declaration during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ashley Ian Smith, Counsel for the Sewerage and Water Board, addressed the Commission and stated that when Mayor Latoya Cantrell declared an emergency, it was determined that any request for emergency pay would not meet the requirements under Rule VIII, Section 11.1. This rule stipulates that essential employees are eligible for special compensation only when the Mayor of New Orleans declares an official emergency and orders that only "essential" employees report to work while all "non-essential" employees remain away from work. Because all employees were expected to work, virtually or otherwise, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Howard is not eligible to receive emergency pay. Commissioner Surprenant moved to deny the request. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

It was requested that the Commission take up an additional agenda item regarding a request from Municipal Traffic Court for approval of an additional unclassified position. Commissioner Surprenant moved to deny the request to consider the agenda item. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Monteverde, and it was approved unanimously.

There being no additional business to consider, Commissioner Surprenant moved for adjournment at 12:08 p.m. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.




John Korn, Vice-Chairperson

Mark C. Surprenant

[Mark C. Surprenant \(Feb 5, 2025 13:38 CST\)](#)

Mark Surprenant, Commissioner



Andrew Monteverde (Feb 5, 2025 12:28 CST)

Andrew Monteverde, Commissioner