

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the City Civil Service Commission was held on Friday, July 12, 2024 in the City Council Chambers, 1300 Perdido Street, New Orleans, LA 70112. Doddie Smith, Personnel Administrator called the roll. Present were Vice-Chairperson John Korn, Commissioner Mark Surprenant, Commissioner Ruth White Davis, and Commissioner Andrew Monteverde. Vice-Chairperson Korn convened the meeting at 10:06 a.m. The Commission then proceeded with the docket. At 11:59 a.m. on the motion of Commissioner Davis and the second of Commissioner Monteverde, the Commission voted unanimously to enter the executive session.

At 12:02 p.m. the Commission completed its executive session and proceeded with the business portion of the meeting.

Director Trepagnier requested that the Commission take up Item #6 at the beginning of the meeting. Commissioner Korn moved to approve the adjustment of the agenda. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #6 was the recognition of the career of Louisiana Civil Service League Executive Vice-President Daniel Sullivan. Director Trepagnier announced that Mr. Sullivan would be retiring this year after 54 years of dedicated service to the Louisiana Civil Service League. She read a brief biography highlighting Mr. Sullivan's achievements and expressed her gratitude for his significant contributions to the merit system in Louisiana. Commissioner Surprenant praised Mr. Sullivan, noting that he has performed exceptionally throughout his tenure. He congratulated Mr. Sullivan on his remarkable career, noting that his departure would be a significant loss. Mr. Sullivan thanked the Commission and commended Director Trepagnier, the Commissioners, and the human resources professionals on staff for their efforts in improving the merit system. He cautioned the Commission regarding studies performed by good government groups that say you should run civil service systems like a private business. Noting that it sounds good, but you cannot do so due to political influences.

Item #1 was the minutes for May 30, 2024. Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #2 was the ratification of Public Integrity Bureau (PIB) extension requests. There being no public comments, Commissioner Surprenant moved to approve the extension requests. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #3a under Rule Amendments was a proposed amendment to Rule II, Section 4.5 and 4.6 to remove disability discrimination and age discrimination as bases for employee appeals. Director Trepagnier informed the Commission that the rule amendment was introduced at the May meeting. The purpose of the amendment is to align the Commission's rules with judicial determinations regarding the Commission's jurisdiction over disability and age discrimination appeals, and to clarify the Commission's definition of sex discrimination based on Supreme Court rulings. Commissioner Monteverde moved to approve the proposed amendment. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #3b was a proposed amendment to Rule V, Section 9.13 to remove the substance abuse screening requirement for a "near miss". Director Trepagnier explained that the proposed amendment originated from a Sewerage and Water Board audit. The audit noted that the requirements for substance abuse screenings following near-miss incidents have a chilling effect on the reporting of such incidents in part because both the employee and the supervisor must relocate for substance abuse testing after a near miss. Director Trepagnier stated that the primary goal of reporting near misses is to facilitate training to mitigate the risk of actual incidents under similar circumstances in the future. Civil Service staff is recommending removing the substance abuse screening requirement for near-miss incidents, while maintaining the requirement for reasonable suspicion testing. If a department suspects that a near-miss incident was caused by an employee being under the influence, the rules will continue to mandate that the employee undergo substance abuse testing. Commissioner Davis moved to approve the proposed amendment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Surprenant, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #3c was an introduction of a proposed amendment to Rule II, Section 4.3 to include the submission of disciplinary appeals via email. Director Trepagnier explained that the proposed rule amendment would formalize the Commission's current practice of accepting disciplinary appeal forms via email. This proposal

ensures that electronic submissions have the same validity as in-person submissions, provided they are received by the close of business on the 30th day. Approval of the proposed amendment will be considered at the next meeting.

Item #3d was an introduction of a proposed amendment to Section 8 of the Civil Service Commission's Procedures for the Conduct of Business Meetings to allow for the submission of online public comments. Commissioner Monteverde explained that he proposed this amendment based on employee suggestions. This amendment provides a mechanism for employees who cannot attend the meeting in person to submit comments on business agenda items.

Director Trepagnier stated that the amendment establishes a process for public participation in Commission meetings. Comments can be submitted via the Civil Service general email address at csno@nola.gov. Public comments will be accepted from the publication of the business agenda until at least two hours prior to the start of the business meeting. Each submission must include the individual's first and last name, department (if applicable), the agenda item number, and whether their comment is informational, for, or opposed to the agenda item. All public comments will be read into the record, with a three-minute limit on the length of each comment. Approval of the proposed amendment will be considered at the next meeting.

Item #4a under Classification and Compensation Matters was a request from the Chief Administrative Officer for an exception to merit pay requirements for the 2023 observation period. Director Trepagnier provided an update to the Commissioners on the item since its discussion at the special meeting in June. She stated that Civil Service staff applied the Commission's directives regarding the interpretation of Civil Service rules relative to merit pay. As a result, 854 additional non-supervisory employees whose goals and/or ratings were approved after the deadline, were cleared to receive merit pay. Additionally, 73 supervisors, whose own goals and ratings were submitted late by their supervisors but who successfully completed goal setting and performance evaluations for their subordinates on time, were also deemed eligible for merit pay.

Director Trepagnier explained that staff is currently working with the Police Department (NOPD) on the eligibility status of approximately 172 supervisors at NOPD. Due to the frequent transfers within NOPD, it is challenging to determine which supervisors were responsible for late goal setting and/or performance ratings. She stated that 73 supervisors who did not set or approve their goals or ratings in accordance with the deadlines were confirmed as ineligible. Non-supervisory

employees at NOPD who “Exceeded Expectations” but did not receive timely goals/ratings were included in the 854 who had been approved for merit pay. Director Trepagnier also noted that she has met twice with Christina Hamilton, a representative of the Chief Administrative Office, to review the specifics of each employee.

Item #4b was a request from the Sewerage and Water Board to create the new classification of Utility Business Services Manager. Mr. Robert Hagmann, Personnel Administrator of the Classification and Compensation Division, stated that the new job classification would be located in the General Superintendent’s Office with the objective of centralizing the management and staff responsible for overseeing and administering S&WB construction contracts and grants. Director Trepagnier stated that this request is a part of the staff and Commission’s ongoing efforts to assist the Sewerage and Water Board in addressing operational issues by creating new positions to enhance operational efficiency. Commissioner Monteverde moved to approve the request. Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #4c was a request from the Sewerage and Water Board to create the new classification of Utility Security Supervisor. Mr. Hagmann explained that the Sewerage and Water Board currently employs Special Agents and Senior Special Agents, all of whom report to the Utility Services Manager, which is an exempt-level classification. The proposed classification will be a non-exempt first line supervisory position with an annual salary of \$62,390. Mr. Hagmann stated that the Sewerage and Water Board intends to hire additional security personnel, with each Utility Security Supervisor overseeing at least two employees. Commissioner Davis moved to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Monteverde, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #4d was a request from the Aviation Board for hiring rates and a title change for airport maintenance and related job classifications. Mr. Hagmann stated that there is a significant shortage of people working in the trades, noting the airport’s difficulty in recruiting and retaining these personnel. Staff is recommending a 10% increase in hiring rates for non-exempt classifications, a 7.5% increase for exempt managers, and a pay policy guaranteeing a minimum 5% pay increase.

Commissioner Korn asked about the severity of the shortage at the Aviation Board. Mr. Hagmann detailed the various levels of trade positions at the airport, stating that Airport Technician I is a first-line maintenance role requiring no specialized skills;

Airport Technician II involves more skilled trades such as carpentry and painting; and higher-level positions like the Airport Technician Specialists are licensed tradespeople. Director Trepagnier added that despite there being a new facility, there is still a need for routine and preventative maintenance, which will require staffing these classifications. Commissioner Davis moved to approve the request. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #4e was a request from the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness for hiring rates and a title change for Hazard Mitigation job classifications. Mr. Hagmann reported that the city has been trying to recruit a Hazard Mitigation Coordinator for over a year. The Hazard Mitigation Coordinator position would receive a salary increase from \$60,000 to \$76,000, making it more competitive in the relative labor market. Additionally, a 15% salary adjustment to the Hazard Mitigation Administrator is proposed to retain the present incumbent in the position. Mr. Hagmann explained that the Hazard Mitigation Coordinator will work with inter-governmental agencies to address and prevent future disaster-related expenses. Commissioner Monteverde moved to approve the request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis and approved unanimously.

Item #4f was a request from the Health Department for a new special rate of pay to enhance employee professional development. Mr. Hagmann stated that this special rate of pay would be available for New Orleans Health Department employees who actively and successfully participate in a professional development program designed to enhance the professional capabilities related to public health service delivery. Mr. Hagmann explained that the 1.25% special rate of pay would be sponsored by the Center for Disease Control with the goal of enhancing public service delivery. There would be a sunset provision that would call for the special rate of pay to cease in November 2027, unless the grant funding is renewed.

Commissioner Davis asked if the matter would come back before the Commission at the end of the grant funding. Mr. Hagmann responded that at the end of the funding, the Commission may be asked to extend the special rate of pay if a new funding source is identified. Commissioner Davis moved to approve the request. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #4g was an introduction of an amendment to Rule IV, Section 1.6 regarding shift differentials. Mr. Hagmann stated that the shift differentials are universal across the city. He explained that the second shift receives a 2.5% premium, and the third shift receives a 5% premium. With this rule amendment, staff would create a separate

shift differential for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) that would encourage EMS employees to take on difficult-to-fill overnight shift assignments. There would be an increase of 10% in pay for people with work assignments between 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. and an increase of 5% in pay for those who work 2 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

William Salmeron, Chief of EMS, addressed the Commission and expressed gratitude to the Commission and Civil Service staff for their continuous support. He stated that on some shifts only 3-4 of the required EMS trucks are consistently staffed, necessitating the hiring of contractors for the additional trucks at a significant cost. Chief Salmeron acknowledged that night watch is not for everyone, as it requires sleeping during the day and staying awake at night, but emphasized it is a critical shift. He stated that the additional incentive also aims to establish a consistent, cohesive team of EMS staff for night shifts, thereby reducing the need for day shift employees to work overtime. Commissioner Davis moved to approve the request. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #5 under Recruitment and Selection Matters was a request for approval of examination announcements. Commissioner Monteverde moved to approve announcements 11085-11119. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #7 was a report on House Resolution 334, instructing the Commission not to proceed with the move of the Sewerage and Water Board to State Civil Service due to an anticipated amendment to Act 384, Section 2. Director Trepagnier reported that staff received a resolution noting that the act included an uncoded section instructing the City Civil Service Commission and State Civil Service Commission to cooperatively develop a plan for transferring all Sewerage and Water Board employees to the State Civil Service. However, this language was not intended to be codified into the act, so the resolution instructed the Commission not to proceed with this transfer.

Item #8 was a notice of the formation of a subcommittee of the Commission for the purpose of streamlining existing Civil Service Rules. Commissioner Surprenant proposed a standing committee that consists of Director Trepagnier, Executive Counsel Christina Carroll, and at least one of the Commissioners to review the Civil Service Rules and propose rule amendments aiming to identify efficiencies while staying within the fundamentals of the Civil Service system. Director Trepagnier noted that the goal would be to have a core internal group that worked on the

amendments primarily, and if needed, subject matter experts from other entities, based on the group or rules being reviewed, would be consulted. Commissioner Korn volunteered to serve on the subcommittee. Commissioner Davis moved to approve the formation of the subcommittee. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

There being no additional business to consider, Commissioner Davis made a motion for adjournment at 12:44 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Monteverde and approved unanimously by the Commission.

John Korn

[John Korn \(Sep 25, 2024 07:28 CDT\)](#)

John Korn, Vice-Chairperson

Mark Surprenant

[Mark Surprenant \(Sep 23, 2024 14:56 EDT\)](#)

Mark Surprenant, Commissioner

Ruth White Davis

[Ruth White Davis \(Sep 24, 2024 12:53 CDT\)](#)

Ruth White Davis, Commissioner

Andrew Monteverde

[Andrew Monteverde \(Sep 23, 2024 13:59 CDT\)](#)

Andrew Monteverde, Commissioner