

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
FRIDAY, APRIL 11, 2025

The regular monthly meeting of the City Civil Service Commission was held on Friday, April 11, 2025, in the City Council Chambers, 1300 Perdido Street, New Orleans, LA 70112. Ms. Stacie Joseph called the roll. Present were Chairperson Brittney Richardson, Vice-Chairperson John Korn, Commissioner Mark Surprenant, and Commissioner Andrew Monteverde. Commissioner Richardson convened the meeting at 10:03 a.m. The Commission then proceeded with the docket. At 10:12 a.m. on the motion of Commissioner Monteverde and the second of Commissioner Surprenant, the Commission voted to go into executive session.

At 10:41 a.m. the Commission completed its executive session and proceeded with the business portion of the meeting.

Item #1 was the minutes for March 14, 2025. Commissioner Monteverde moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Korn seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

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 Korn and approved unanimously.

Item #3a under Rule Amendments was a proposed amendment to Rule XI Sections 1.3, 1.5, and 1.12 to remove the second level supervisor from goal planning and to provide for a one-week grace period. The amendment of this rule was introduced at the previous Commission meeting following collaboration between Civil Service staff and City departmental leadership to enhance the performance planning and evaluation process. The primary recommendation entails removing the second-level supervisor from the goal planning approval requirement, while maintaining their role as a step in the final rating approval chain. Additionally, the amended rule grants the Personnel Director discretionary authority to approve late goals setting and/or rating received up to one week immediately following the performance planning or performance evaluation deadlines at the formal request of the Appointing Authority with sufficient cause. Personnel Director Amy Trepagnier requested that the

Commission retroactively apply the provisions to the 2024 performance evaluations. Commissioner Korn moved to approve the proposed amendment and apply the provisions to the 2024 performance evaluations. Commissioner Surprenant seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #3b was the introduction of a proposed amendment to Rule IV Section 9.2(a) to change the pay cycle for non-exempt employees engaged in law enforcement activities. Director Trepagnier noted that this item was brought to the attention of the Commission at the previous meeting, based on the request of a police officer. The Commission agreed to move forward, and the language for the rule has been drafted to change to the pay cycle from a two-week to a one-week cycle. Director Trepagnier clarified that this item would be an introduction to the rule amendment and the Rule would lie over for public comment until the next Commission meeting.

Item #4a under Classification and Compensation Matters was a proposed amendment for a new special rate of pay to establish discretionary pay and leave incentives. This item was deferred at the request of the Chief Administrative Office so that they can determine the fiscal impact of the rule.

Item #4b was a request from the Sewerage and Water Board Human Resources to overturn staff's denial of a request for professional certification pay. Jackie Spencer, Risk Manager for the Sewerage and Water Board, addressed the Commission on behalf of several Worker's Compensation employees. Ms. Spencer requested that the Workers' Compensation employees, who have earned Certified Workers' Compensation Professional certificates, be eligible for the professional certification incentive pay of 5%. Director Trepagnier stated that at the time of the Sewerage and Water Board's request in November 2023, the eligibility criteria for professional certification pay included the prerequisite of either a bachelor's degree or exempt (salaried) work experience. At that time, the request was denied because it did not meet this criterion. In 2024, the criteria was expanded to accept at least 15 hours of continuing education per year in lieu of a bachelor's degree or the exempt work experience. Director Trepagnier stated that staff recommend that the Commission deny the request, as the Certified Workers Compensation Professional designation does not meet the original prerequisites nor the current, expanded criteria of 15 hours of continuing education per year. Commissioner Surprenant moved to deny the request. Commissioner Korn seconded the motion, and it was denied unanimously.

Item #5 under Recruitment and Selection Matters was a request for the approval of examination announcements. Director Trepagnier explained that staff recently changed our policy to permit the acceptance of foreign high school diplomas. As a part of that change, staff closed job postings and reopened them with the updated information. Commissioner Monteverde moved to approve examination announcements 11265-11362. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Korn and approved unanimously.

Item #6 was a request from the New Orleans Firefighters Association for an investigation and review of NOFD's disciplinary matrix. Aaron Mischler, President of the New Orleans Fire Fighters Association (NOFFA), addressed the Commission on behalf of the union members. Mr. Mischler stated that the matrix has minimum penalties that have resulted in an onslaught of heavy-handed suspensions and discipline for "minor" infractions. He requested that the Commission consider removing the minimum penalties, and in its place, there be pre-disciplinary and pre-termination meetings where the final disciplinary action is at the discretion of the Appointing Authority.

William Goforth, Deputy City Attorney, addressed the Commission in opposition of the request. Mr. Goforth stated that he did not see the request to be appropriate use of the Commission's investigative authority and recommended that the request be denied. Roman Nelson, Superintendent of the Fire Department, addressed the Commission in opposition of the request for investigation. Commissioner Monteverde recused himself from this item and Commissioner Surprenant moved to deny the request. Commissioner Korn seconded the motion, and it was denied unanimously.

Item #7 was a request from the New Orleans Firefighters Association for a review of ongoing issues with NOFD's sick leave policy. Aaron Mischler addressed the Commission and presented concerns regarding the department's sick leave documentation process. Mr. Mischler stated that firefighters face temporary unpaid leave status while awaiting human resources' processing of their medical documentation.

In response, William Goforth opposed immediate action by the Commission, citing procedural concerns. He emphasized the necessity for formal written submissions detailing specific allegations to ensure proper investigation protocol.

Superintendent Roman Nelson defended the current policy, maintaining that existing procedures serve as necessary safeguards to prevent the disbursement of verified sick leave benefits prior to proper documentation submission.

Director Trepagnier proposed a measured approach, recommending a case-by-case review of the instances cited by Mr. Mischler. This review would evaluate potential inefficiencies in both Civil Service rules and Fire Department policies before proceeding with any formal investigation. Commissioner Monteverde recused himself from this item and Commissioner Surprenant moved to deny the request for an investigation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Korn and denied unanimously. Commissioner Surprenant also made a motion that all requests for investigations by the Commission be made in writing for any opposing parties to review and respond to prior to appearing on the Commission's monthly meeting agenda. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Korn, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #8 was a request from the New Orleans Firefighters Association to develop an avenue of appeal for employees who receive a yearly performance rating of "Meets Expectations." NOFFA President Aaron Mischler advocated for expanding the performance rating appeals process. He proposed establishing an appeals mechanism for employees who receive "Meets Expectations" ratings, complementing the existing appeals process for "Does Not Meet Expectations" ratings.

Director Trepagnier stated that the current evaluation chain of approval requires two supervisor signatures to ensure a fair rating. She noted that the appeals process for a "Does Not Meet Expectations" is warranted due to the significant implications of such evaluations and the requirement of adequate documentation to justify the employee's failure to meet expectations set forth in the goal planning period. Superintendent Roman Nelson expressed opposition to the request, clarifying that management had not directed supervisors to default to "Meets Expectations" ratings. Rather, supervisors were instructed that "Exceeds Expectations" ratings would require documentation demonstrating exceptional performance metrics and achievements. Commissioner Monteverde recused himself from this item and Commissioner Korn moved to deny the request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Surprenant and the request was denied unanimously.

Item #9 was a request from Senior Police Officer Daniel Grijalva to change the classification of his injury from Workers Compensation to Injured on Duty (IOD). Director Trepagnier stated that the IOD documents were not received in a timely manner, but the injury otherwise meets the requirements for an IOD classification. Communications supporting the request for a change in the classification of Officer Grijalva's injury were also received from the Police Department. Commissioner Korn moved to approve the request. Commissioner Monteverde seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

Item #10 was a report on overtime usage. Civil Service Rules currently require bi-annual audits of overtime usage in excess of 750 hours per calendar year. Mr. Robert Hagmann stated that the departments currently exceeding the threshold of overtime allowance are those that are public safety, special events driven or departments with multiple vacancies. No action was required by the Commission.

There being no additional business to consider, Commissioner Korn moved for adjournment at 12:17 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Monteverde and approved unanimously.



Brittney Richardson (May 19, 2025 13:17 CDT)

Brittney Richardson, Chairperson



John Korn, Vice-Chairperson



Mark Surprenant (May 12, 2025 13:35 CDT)

Mark Surprenant, Commissioner



Andrew Monteverde (May 12, 2025 15:32 CDT)

Andrew Monteverde, Commissioner