

**MUNICIPAL FIRE AND POLICE CIVIL SERVICE
LAFAYETTE, LOUISIANA
300 N. DUGAS RD
LAFAYETTE, LA 70507
(337) 291-8762**

A meeting of the Lafayette Municipal Fire and Police Civil Service Board was held on November 13, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. in the Lafayette Consolidated Government Civil service testing room, 705 West University Avenue, Lafayette, Louisiana. Audio recording of this meeting will become part of the Board's permanent records.

Present at the meeting were Chairman Ron Clark, Vice Chairman L. Wayne Prejean, Lane T. Cortez, Dwight Prudhomme, Charley Whipp III, Board Attorney Candice Hattan, CAO Rachel Godeaux, Attorney Michael Corry, City Attorney Patrick Ottinger, Fire Chief Robert Benoit, Josh Bullen, John Bourgeois, Chief Troy Gauthier, Chief Antoinette Gerald, Chief Forrest Chaisson, Human Resource Director Rick Zeno, Shekeitha Poullard, Fire Captain Mitch Lanclous, Fire Captain Rusty Goulas, Major Michael Brown, Jason Boudreaux, Board Secretary Mary Francis, Kelley Ackal, Captain Shawn Terro, Captain Blake Menard, Nathan Roy, Lucas Daigle

Meeting called to order at 9:10 a.m. and opening statement read by Chairman Ron Clark.

1. Board authorization to approve minutes of October 9, 2024 board meeting

Motion was made to approve minutes of October 9, 2024 board meeting by L. Wayne Prejean

Motion seconded by Dwight Prudhomme

Public comment: None

Opposition: None

Motion carried unanimously

2. Board authorization to approve applications for Police Chief, Police Captain and Hazardous Materials Coordinator

Board members L. Wayne Prejean and Charley Whipp III requested clarity from Fire Chief Benoit regarding the HazMat Coordinator qualification requirements and certifications due to the various certifications received by applicants. Fire Chief Benoit expressed the importance of the right candidate possessing the right certifications rather than just completing course hours. Fire Chief Benoit noted that Hazmat certifications that include a seal with registration numbers are nationally accredited and acknowledged.

Jason Boudreaux stated that he agrees with Fire Chief Benoit but also noted the vagueness of the current Hazmat class plan. He asks that the board consider that some of the applicants who do not hold a sealed certification still possess a strong background in the Hazmat field and should have the opportunity to take the exam. He stressed the importance of staying within the specification of the class plan and that the appointing authority will make the final decision.

Training Chief Gauthier provided additional insight to the Board regarding the nationally acknowledged Hazmat certifications. Chairman Ron inquired if the sealed national Hazmat certification required any extra knowledge to obtain; it was confirmed by Chief Gauthier that it did not but he also noted the high difficulty level of the exam.

Mr. Boudreaux agreed with the comments given by Fire Chief Benoit and Training Chief Gauthier but expressed his concerns regarding the class plan not having a clear definition of which certification(s) are necessary to take the exam. He suggested tabling the motion to approve Hazmat applications till an amended class plan details which Hazmat certification(s) an applicant should have to take the exam. Chairman Clark checked with Chief Benoit to ensure the delay of this appointment does not cause any setbacks to the division while the applications are tabled. Chief Benoit confirmed that he has the necessary amount of people within Hazmat until a new coordinator is appointed.

Motion was made to table Hazardous Materials Coordinator until class plan is defined by L. Wayne Prejean

Motion seconded by Dwight Prudhomme

Public comment: None

Opposition: None

Roll was called with Dwight Prudhomme, L. Wayne Prejean, Lane T. Cortez, Charley Whipp III, and Chairman Ron Clark voting yes

Motion carried unanimously

Police Chief

Qualified applicants:

Brabham, Dorian R. (Vet pref)
Burnside, Tom J.
Dobler, Herbert (Vet pref)
Edmondson, Martin D. (Vet pref)
Fitzgerald Ph. D., Joel F.
Lukens, Philip D.
Roberts, LeJon M.
Toomey, Keith A. (Vet pref)
Trouard, Paul A. W/M
Young, Jeffery S.

Police Captain

Qualified applicants:

Ardoin, Jason P.
Delahoussaye, Toby A.
Guidry, Jessica L.
Judice, Ryan J.
Mayfield, Jarvis S.
Oakes, Nicole B.
Quebedeaux, Gary J.
Thibeaux, Don W.

Motion was made to approve applications by Dwight Prudhomme

Motion seconded by L. Wayne Prejean

Public comment: None

Opposition: None

Motion carried unanimously

3. Board authorization to approve scores for Police Major, Police Corporal, Police Communications Officer I, Departmental Records Clerk (Police), Fire Inspector, Fire Records Clerk, and Fire Communications Officer

Chairman Clark read all passing scores aloud.

Motion to was made to approve scores by Dwight Prudhomme

Motion seconded by L. Wayne Prejean

Public comment: None

Opposition: None

Motion carried unanimously

4. Board authorization to add complaint of Prohibited Political Involvement by Police Major Michael Brown to agenda

Chairman Clark confirmed that the agenda item was placed to only discuss the Boards jurisdiction of handling the complaint. Board attorney Candice Hattan confirmed that the Board does have jurisdiction to an investigation on the complaint. Chairman Clark noted that the Board will vote on if an investigation is necessary at the next meeting.

Motion to add complaint to agenda by Charley Whipp III

Motion seconded by L. Wayne Prejean

Public comment:

Opposition: Major Michael Brown stated that he recalls a similar situation of a former Lafayette Police Department board member representative, Guy LeBreton, whose matter was refused to be investigated by the Board

Roll was called with Dwight Prudhomme, L. Wayne Prejean, Lane T. Cortez, Charley Whipp III, and Chairman Ron Clark voting yes

Motion carried unanimously

5. Public Hearing: Joshua Bullen vs. Lafayette Consolidated Government (Fire Dept.) Appeal of Suspension "Potential executive session. Parties notified on October 10, 2024"

Firefighter Joshua Bullen represented himself while Lafayette Consolidated Government was represented by Attorney Michael Corry. Ms. Kelley Ackal was the assigned Court Reporter transcribing this hearing. Witnesses were sworn in by Board Attorney Candice Hattan. Ms. Hattan advised all witness of the rules of sequestration. Testimony was given by the following witnesses: Captain Mitch Lanclos, Captain Rusty Goulas, Captain Blake Menard, Fire Prevention Chief Forrest Chaisson, Deputy Chief John Bourgeois, Ms. Shekeitha Pollard, Fire Chief Robert Benoit, and Fire Training Chief Troy Gauthier

Lane Cortez made motion to go into executive session to discuss professional character and competence of Joshua Bullen
Motion seconded by Dwight Prudhomme
Public comment: None
Opposition: Attorney Michael Corry
Roll was called with Dwight Prudhomme, Lane Cortez, Chairman Clark all voted yes while L. Wayne Prejean voted no
Charley Whipp III recused himself
Motion carried unanimously
Board went into executive session at 11:45 am

Motion to come out of executive session at 12:10 pm was made by L. Wayne Prejean
Motion seconded by Lane Cortez
Roll was called with Dwight Prudhomme, Lane Cortez, Chairman Clark and L. Wayne Prejean all voted yes
Public comment: None
Opposition: None
Motion carried unanimously

Motion to was made to uphold suspension by L. Wayne Prejean
Motion seconded by Dwight Prudhomme
Roll was called with Dwight Prudhomme, Lane Cortez, and L. Wayne Prejean all voted yes while Chairman Clark voted no
Public comment: None
Opposition: None
Motion carried unanimously

Board member Prudhomme shared his reasons for supporting the suspension due to insubordination, stating that he believes it was carried out in good faith. He expressed that the situation was, to some extent, unnecessary and tragic, stemming from a disagreement over drying of cups. Mr. Prudhomme also remarked that the issue could have been addressed differently.

Board attorney Hattan noted that the record would reflect Attorney Michael Corry's objection to the Board's executive session.

6. General Board business, if any –

Board Secretary Mary Francis reported receiving three public information requests. Ms. Megan Wyatt and Mr. Matt both requested copies of the applications for the Police Chief position. The third request came from Major Brown, who sought a copy of the complaint made against him. Secretary Francis informed the Board about the upcoming relocation of the Police and Fire Civil Service Board office, though the new location was not yet determined. Chairman Ron reassured everyone that LCG is collaborating with the department to ensure a suitable space is secured promptly. Ms. Hattan suggested finding a central location that would be accessible for the respective departments.

7. Report of Counsel or legal updates, if any –

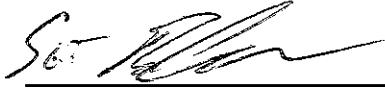
Board attorney Hattan informed the board that she would provide a briefing on the opposition presented by Major Brown before the hearing. She indicated that she would consult with former chairman Jason Boudreaux to locate the transcript and minutes related to the Guy LeBreton complaint. Ms. Hattan recalled that this complaint had been referred to the acting Chief at the time, Reggie Thomas, who was hesitant to make a decision due to political conflicts.

Chairman Clark sought legal counsel from Ms. Hattan regarding the objection raised by Mr. Corry. She stated that when an objection is filed, a basis for it must be presented. Ms. Hattan also mentioned that she had conferred with the State Examiner before the hearing and assured the Board of the current Examiner's reliability.

Board member Cortez asked Ms. Hattan for her counsel on the probability of Board voting outcomes. Ms. Hattan explained that if the vote had resulted in a tie of 2:2, the decision made by the city would stand.

8. Public Comment – None

Motion to adjourn by L. Wayne Prejean
Motion seconded by Dwight Prudhomme
Public comment: None
Motion carried unanimously
Meeting adjourned at 12:28 pm



Ron R. Clark
Chairman