

**COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING**  
**Minutes of January 16, 2008**

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Koerbel called to order the Meeting of Crafton Borough Council, in Council Chambers of the Community Center at 7:30 pm. Flag Salute was led by Mr. Byers. Roll call, by Mrs. Tremblay, recorded eight members of Council present (8), as follows: Mr. Byers, Mr. Cindric, Mr. Christman, Mr. Donovan, Mrs. Sappie, Mrs. Viola and Ms. Koerbel (Mr. Ogden present after roll call; 9-0) – Also present were Mayor O’Connell, Manager Sample, and Solicitor Ayoob. Chief Rost, Ed Doherty and Christine O’Brien of the Civil Service Commission, were also in attendance.

**CITIZEN’S PRESENT TO ADDRESS COUNCIL**

None

**PRESIDENT’S COMMENT**

Ms. Koerbel apologized to the Civil Service Commission for the confusion at the last meeting in scheduling this meeting, that their participation in this special meeting was requested during the Executive Session of Council. She requested systematic discussion per the Agenda; one issue at a time, and advised that although Council is permitted to vote at this public meeting, she would prefer to fully discuss the matters on the Agenda and wait until next week’s regular Council meeting to take any action.

**PURPOSE OF SPECIAL MEETING****1. Review Amendment No. 3 as approved by the Civil Service Commission**

Amendment No. 3 was unanimously approved by the Civil Service Commission and provided to Council for approval. The intention of the Amendment was to revert back to the same language and requirements that existed prior to changing it to accommodate the SHACOG testing; requiring only high school or GED. It was suggested to also include 2,000 hrs. as a Military Police officer. Ms. Koerbel noted that those candidates with military service are afforded Veteran’s Preference Points in the scoring. Mayor O’Connell added, with regard to the general qualifications, that we simply make it so that someone could have military service that could be a substitute for the college credits, so we could have a bigger pool of applicants. Mr. Bloom stated that there are educational opportunities in the Military to earn college credits. Mr. Cindric asked if the specific field of study should be defined with regard to the college credit requirement. Mayor O’Connell provided requirement examples (City of Pittsburgh, Pa State Police, Washinton State) with language to include full active military duty, honorable discharge, and 30 college credits. Mr. Doherty said that he, and Ms. O’Brien, would be agreeable to include the addition of “Military Police Officer” in the Amendment. Solicitor Ayoob stated that any amendment would first need to be adopted by the Civil Service Commission, then it is approved (ratified, confirmed) by Council. It was clarified that in addition to these requirements, Act 120 Certification was also required. Ms. Koerbel commented that while we would like as many people to apply as possible, Council should be looking at what is best for our borough and what qualifications are desired to provide the best candidates for consideration. Mr. Sample reported that of the municipalities that participated in the last SHACOG hiring process, none had any military language in their requirements (required 60 credits, 120 credits-Bachelor degree, or high school or GED). Ms. Koerbel asked the members of the Civil Service Commission to consider Councils suggestions and provide an answer to Council for the next meeting.

**2. Review the Testing Process being Proposed by the Civil Service Commission**

The Third Party, Chiefs Fruecht and Pushak, proposal was reviewed by Council.

**3. Review Alternative Testing Methods**

An alternate method was proposed by Mayor O’Connell and Chief Rost for consideration.

Solicitor Ayoob suggested that the Civil Service Commission's solicitor be consulted on the application of Veteran's Preference points. This alternate process suggested that the Oral Exam be conducted by members of the Civil Service Commission, or some Chiefs that would do it for a small fee. Chief Rost suggested that it could be done by a panel of Chiefs for about \$500. Mr. Doherty disagreed with the suggestion that the oral exam be conducted by the Civil Service Commission, that there are potential conflicts; being the testing body as well as the hearing body if there would be a challenge to the testing procedure. Mr. Doherty stated that he does not believe that the Civil Service Commission, whether it be then or now, is, by any means, qualified to interview a potential police officer and ask relevant work-situation questions and how they would handle it, and then subsequently score them on that; the Commission will not, under any circumstances, perform these interviews. It was suggested that the background investigation be performed only on the top 3 candidates, rather than the top ten. Mr. Doherty commented that a lot of time could be lost if the top 3 do not pass the background check, and you have to start the process all over again for the next 3 candidates. Mr. Doherty confirmed that they are not looking to have the background investigations done by an outside source, and anticipates having it performed by the Crafton Police Dept., and only if they cannot perform this task would the Commission consider contracting with an outside source at the proposed cost of \$1,800. Mrs. Sappie inquired as to whether or not this task was performed while on duty or on overtime? Chief Rost stated that it would depend on the available manpower.

Ms. Koerbel expressed concerns that this alternative proposal involves more time of the office staff and the volunteers of the Commission, who do have full time jobs. That the borough has expended money on Civil Service Commission issues/decertifying the eligibility list, and could have been money better spent. She added that this process should be more comprehensive, preserving it's integrity, de-politicizing the process and have it performed by professionals. That the cost being offset by the application fee would appear to be within their budget. Mr. Doherty stated that he would inquire if a reduced cost could be considered if there would only be a few applicants. Mayor O'Connell believes that this process could be handled by the administrative staff and members of the Commission. Mr. Doherty stated that there is a lot more to it than is being suggested by the Mayor, and does believe there are legitimate concerns having the Commission or Chief Rost involved in the testing process. Mr. Doherty further added that the Commission's role should be to oversee a process that, one, the borough should not, to some degree, be involved in, such as the oral exam. Hiring a third party alleviates the potential for some issues that may come up. Mr. Christman inquired about due process and seeking 3 competitive bids to perform this work. Solicitor Ayoob advised that it is not Councils responsibility to do anything in this process; it is the sole responsibility of the Civil Service Commission to produce an eligibility list, in accordance with it's Rules and Regulations and in accordance with the guidelines of the Borough Code, using resources and support provided by the Borough, and are not required to seek competitive bids. That it is the Commission's ultimate decision on how they desire to proceed. Mr. Doherty added that he had looked into the Mayor's proposal concerning free psychological testing by the Police Academy, and discovered that it is not free, and would cost approximately \$150. Ms. Koerbel stated that it appears that Council is spending money, again, to save money. The cost of advertising tonight's meeting, the solicitor's appearance fee, etc. – again, money that could be better spent. She asked that the Commission consider all that has been discussed, and if any other service provider is found, that the information be given to the Commission for consideration.

#### **4. Discuss the Aspects of Using Part-Time Police Officers**

Manager Sample advised that he had spoken to Joseph Rizzo of the County Sheriff's office, and they could offer assistance on a temporary basis, by providing a County Officer. Their rate would be at time and half, being \$47.22 per hour, \$377.76 per 8 hr. shift. They would require 24 hr. notice, and the available officers post their names to a sign up sheet. Ms. Koerbel noted that this is a consideration on a temporary basis, but Council needs to decide if it, on the other hand, prefers to pursue hiring of part time officers. Solicitor Ayoob suggested that before Council expends money on the legal aspects of pursuing the hiring of part-time officers, that it reach a conceptual understanding and are okay with hiring part-timers. Establish parameters, training, wages, etc., but must first approach the Crafton Police bargaining unit. Chief Rost spoke on the matter of assistance from the County Sheriff's office. He stated that he also had spoken to them, and said they could not guarantee manpower availability, that they would need

to be scheduled two weeks in advance, various hours/shifts and would be obligated to pay holiday pay, etc. if they worked on a holiday. Chief Rost stated that there is not a serious staffing problem presently, but come April, our officers will want to start taking vacations. He is not suggesting to use part-timers to fill full time positions; only use part-timers as a fill-in if/when short staffed. Solicitor Ayoob clarified the Mayor’s emergency powers, stating that she does not have the power to hire part-timers due to a staffing shortage; she could declare a State of Emergency due to a major catastrophe or event such as a riot, terrorist activity, mass destruction, tornado/weather related emergency, etc. – but would not have such authority with regard to the staffing problem as it exists. Ms. Koerbel stated that we first need to approach the bargaining unit, and second, consider hiring special labor counsel, and which counsel should approach the bargaining unit on this issue. Mr. Cindric questioned Council’s previous hiring of a special labor counsel. Ms. Koerbel clarified that Mr. Wolfe was hired for a specific purpose; to assist one of our officers with regard to a suppeona issue. Solicitor Ayoob further commented on reasons for having a special labor counsel. An outside labor counsel would be neutral to the parties, could readily provide answers to Council and would be more experienced and knowledgeable on labor matters, and less expensive. There was a consensus that Manager Sample and Solicitor Ayoob would meet with the bargaining unit on this matter.

Ms. Koerbel advised that, following the meeting, Council would be going into an Executive Session to discuss a police personnel issue.

Mr. Doherty advised that both he and Ms. O’Brien were prepared, at this time, to approve the suggested changes to Amendment No. 3. Solicitor Ayoob noted that he would be comfortable defending Council’s approval of the amendment prior to it’s adoption by the Civil Service Commission, with the understanding that Council’s approval is conditioned on the Civil Service Commission ultimately adopting it; and at the end of the day, it would be approved by both and he would not be hung up on the timing issue.

Amendment No. 3, Section 3.5 General Qualifications, was amended to read: Every applicant for any position in the Police Department must, at the time of application, possess a diploma from an accredited high school or a graduate equivalency diploma; and have successfully complete a minimum of sixty (60) credit hours in an accredited college or university, or a minimum of 2000 in-service hours as a Police Officer, or Military Police Officer, or two years of full active military service with an honorable discharge and have successfully completed a minimum of thirty (30) credit hours in an accredited college or university, possess a valid motor vehicle operator’s license .....

**MOTION:** It was regularly moved by Mr. Byers, seconded by Mrs. Sappie, to approve Amendment No. 3, conditioned upon the Civil Service Commission’s adoption of the Amendment, as re-stated.

MOTION carried by Unanimous Roll Call Vote (9-0).

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** It was regularly moved by Mrs. Sappie, seconded by Mr. Donovan, that this meeting be adjourned.

MOTION carried by a Unanimous Voice Vote (9-0).

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Tremblay, Borough Secretary