

**Lancaster County Sheriff's Office**  
**Merit Commission Meeting Minutes**  
August 3, 2021

Meeting was called to order at 0813 hours. Peterson pointed out the Open Meetings Act, which was posted by the door of the meeting room.

Members present: Deputy Jason Peterson, Mike Thew and Troy Hawk. Also present were Sheriff Terry Wagner, Captain John Vik and Sergeant Drew Bolzer.

Motioned by Thew to approve the minutes from June 1, 2021. Seconded by Hawk. Motion carried, 3-0.

Article 4, section 1, subsection 3 of the Merit Commission Rules and Regulations states that "all examinations for appointment to the classified service shall be approved by the Commission and the Sheriff." Vik and Bolzer are proposing a change to the examinations. Historically the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) has been the standard for entrance to the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center (NLETC) in Grand Island. There are two tests, language and reading, which NLETC has mandated and requires a grade of 70% or higher to get into the academy. Once an individual has passed the TABE, NLETC does not require them to re-take it, no matter how much time has lapsed. Lancaster County Sheriff's Office currently uses the POST (Police Officers Selection Test), including the math and report writing portions, with the TABE administered prior to enrollment at NLETC. LSO is proposing to switch testing exclusively to the TABE, regardless of an applicant's past results. If the test is not passed on the first attempt, they have the option to retake the test from a different form. If they do not pass the second time, they must wait 90 days to try again. Thew motioned to approve using TABE exams in lieu of the POST exam, beginning the next testing phase. Seconded by Hawk. Motion carried, 3-0.

Also in Article 4, section 1, subsection 4 of the Rules and Regulations states that "all examinations for the appointment to the classified service shall be conducted under the supervision of the Commission." Deputy Peterson has historically been involved in the hiring process including proctoring exams, oral boards, and conducting backgrounds. His extensive training in this area has proved an invaluable tool with this process. Currently he is the Chairman of the Merit Commission and, since the board is the appellate for any sort of grievance from the hiring process, he was pulled from the latest testing process to prevent a conflict of interest. Captain Vik was seeking clarification on the level of oversight/involvement the board would like to have in the hiring process. After discussion, it was determined that the Commission simply wants general oversight of the testing process and will delegate the duties of testing to the employees of the Sheriff's office. If an appeal is made, Peterson could recuse himself.

Staffing updates: there are five (5) employees in various stages of the training phase and another four (4) that will start later in the month. Deputy Joe Gehr will retire this month and Deputies Dayna Gulliksen-Knight and Robert Messbarger recently resigned.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 7, 2021.

Moved by Hawk to adjourn. Seconded by Peterson. Meeting adjourned at 0853 hours.