

Lancaster County Sheriff's Office
Merit Commission Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2021

Meeting was called to order at 0816 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, Chief Deputy Ben Houchin, Captain Vik and Sergeant Drew Bolzer.

Motioned by Hawk to approve the minutes from February 16, 2021. Seconded by Thew. Motion carried, 3-0.

Sergeant Bolzer presented the 2021 deputy eligibility list for certification. Bolzer explained that the oral board portion of the application process consists of character questions to assess the ethic and integrity stances of the candidates. This test was designed by Zelle, a contracted third party, to determine which candidate's core values most closely align with the sheriff's office core values. The office's mission statement is also incorporated into the oral boards. Scoring of the oral, physical, and written tests are consistent with the Merit Commission Rule and Regulations. Moved by Thew to approve the list as presented. Seconded by Hawk. Motion carried, 3-0.

Discussion was held on how to establish seniority for candidates who are begin work on the same date. There is no current documentation on how this is determined but past practice has been to grant seniority in the order in which a job offer was extended and accepted. Peterson said he would broach the discussion to the union during upcoming negotiations for input.

Sheriff Wagner and Captain Vik gave staffing updates. Three deputies are currently at the academy in Grand Island (Paige Uzzell, Jesse McManus, and Noah Kingston). There are two (2) pending vacancies, Deputy Joe Gehr is retiring, and Deputy Curt Reha has taken a position with another agency, plus one (1) candidate that has already accepted the position who will attend the August academy. The last advertisement for the deputy position was only open for two weeks. There were 34 applications, of which 14 showed for testing. Six of those passed the written and physical portion of the testing, which makes up the list that was certified during this meeting. Discussion on ways to promote openings included social media, traveling to destinations across the state to accommodate candidates for testing, and posting openings nationally.

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 31, 2021.

Moved by Thew to adjourn. Seconded by Hawk. Meeting adjourned at 0851 hours.