



**PIERCE COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
April 11, 2023**

**AGENDA ITEM I: CALL TO ORDER:**

The regular meeting of the Pierce County Civil Service Commission for Sheriff's Employees was called to order at 5:05p.m. on Tuesday, April 11, 2023. The meeting was held virtually via Zoom and in the Human Resources Department conference room.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Commissioner Paula Wallace Lonergan, Chair; Commissioner Julie Herling; Commissioner Virgilio Cintron

**STAFF PRESENT:** Sherry Hieb, Chief Examiner; Kim Demarco, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

**AGENDA ITEM II: Approval of Minutes**

- Regular Meeting – March 14, 2023

It was moved by Commissioner Cintron to approve the meeting minutes listed above. Commissioner Herling seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

**AGENDA ITEM III: Rule Change: applicable sections of Rule 7 – Examination: to change the minimum passing score for Corrections Deputy to 65%**

Chief Examiner Sherry Hieb introduced the item. The Sheriff's Department is requesting that the minimum passing score on the written examination for Corrections Deputy be changed from 70% to 65%. There are over sixty-four Corrections Deputy vacancies, and the Department is hoping this will add applicants to their candidate pool. The Deputy Sheriff passing point will remain at 70%. If there are any Deputy Sheriff applicants that score between 65% and 70%, they will be contacted to see if they are interested in applying for Corrections Deputy.

For Deputy Sheriff, there were 14 applicants that scored between 65% - 70% from 10/18/2022 through March 15, 2023. While the numbers are not large, the Department is trying to increase the interest in Corrections and get more candidates.

Commissioner Wallace Lonergan asked if there were other exams that Corrections Deputies needed to complete. Ms. Hieb stated that candidates need to pass the written exam as well as the physical abilities test to be placed on the register. After being placed on the register, they go through the Sheriff's Department background process.

Commissioner Herling asked if the Department had always wanted to present the 65% or was it lower. Ms. Hieb stated that the Department and the Guild discussed the issue and decided on the 65% instead of 60%.

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Commissioner Cintron asked what the Public Safety Testing written exam assessed. Ms. Hieb stated that the exam assesses cognitive abilities, work styles, integrity, bio data, deductive and inductive reasoning, information ordering, spatial orientation, written comprehension, written expression. Basic skills. Under integrity the exam measures anti-social behavior, socialization among other items. The exam was developed by I/O Solutions. Pierce County went with Public Safety Testing to be more competitive in the market since many of the agencies in Washington State use their services. A candidate can take one exam and apply for various agencies. Civil Service pays the annual service fee and the Sheriff's Department pays the candidate's test fee.

Commissioner Cintron asked if the Chief Examiner knew how the exam questions were weighted or how the 70% passing rate was decided. Ms. Hieb stated that the Civil Service Rules have always had the 70% passing rate since before 1996. In law enforcement the benchmark is 70%. The Sheriff's Department decided on 65% for Corrections Deputy to gain more applicants. Many of those passing with under 70% are scoring between 67%-68%. Usually only a few points off.

Commissioner Cintron asked what the rest of the process entailed. Ms. Hieb stated that once the register is established, candidates go through the background process which includes a personal history statement (PHS) for them to complete, a pre-oral board interview where they are asked questions about their PHS, an oral board, polygraph, and fingerprinting. The background investigator does criminal records checks, driving checks, credit checks and professional and personal reference checks. Then there is a candidate assessment meeting where a decision to hire is made. After the conditional offer of employment, the candidate takes a medical and psychological exam.

Commissioner Cintron asked if other options rather than a Rule change were considered. Ms. Hieb stated that a change with conditions or an expiration date could have been brought to the Commission. Civil Service brought forth a Rule change because it many take years for the Department to fill over 64 vacancies and the vacancies coming up. If the Department wants to return to 70%, they can bring the request for a Rule change back to the Commission in the future.

Commissioner Wallace Lonergan stated that the Sheriff's Department has brought a request to the Commission five times to extend the probationary period for employees, and in some cases for report writing. She asked if the exam evaluated report writing and, in the event, the passing score is changed, how would we track to see if those passing with under 70% are being successful as they may not have the skills.

Commissioner Herling stated that with her experience in test development, some of the candidates may be missing 70% by only one or two questions. Many agencies have gone to pass/fail scoring so those that score a 60% would still pass. Many of their questions are successful. She stated that from a testing standpoint, she saw this as a small step. The background process and all the phases' candidates need to pass is more telling than one or two questions. We shouldn't rely too much on the written exam.

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It was moved by Commissioner Herling to change the passing score for Corrections Deputy to 65%. Commissioner Cintron seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

**AGENDA ITEM IV: New Business**

Civil Service Chief Examiner Sherry Hieb provided the Commission with statistics and information showing the total number of employees the Commission approved for leave without pay for 2022 and when they returned from leave. See attachment. The statistics show the estimated duration and the actual duration. In some cases, employees returned before their estimated return date. The Commission reviewed the statistics.

Ms. Hieb is in the process of advertising Commissioner Herling's vacant position on the Boards and Commissions website.

**AGENDA ITEM V: Next Regular Meeting – May 9, 2023**

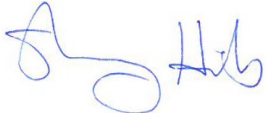
**AGENDA ITEM VI: Public Comment**

No public comment

**AGENDA ITEM VII: Adjourn.**

The meeting adjourned at 5:38p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Sherry D. Hieb  
Chief Examiner