

Portland Custodians' Civil Service Board
Established 1937
May 24, 2022
Board Minutes Summary

The Official Minutes of the Portland Public Schools Custodian Civil Service Board are Sound Recordings of the Meetings. The following is a summary of the May 24, 2022, meeting.

A meeting of the Portland Public Schools Custodian Civil Service Board was held on May 24, 2022, via Google Meet. Mr. Frank Leavitt attended in person from his office at the Blanchard Education Service Center, 501 N Dixon Street, Portland, Oregon. CCSB Chair Brian Caufield, Board Member Laird Cusack, and Board Secretary Jo McClain attended by Google-Meet. The presiding officer of the meeting was Brian Caufield.

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Approval of Hiring Lists

Statistics provided by Mr. Leavitt for this meeting indicated a total of 12 applicants, 8 who took the test, and 4 who were interviewed. The average test score was 94.6%, the average interview score was 86.8%, and the overall average was 92%. Four candidates are on the hiring list.

Board member Brian Caufield confirmed that all rules had been followed in the testing procedure, and the list was approved as presented.

2. New Board Member Search

Mr. Leavitt said he had nothing new on the search. He acknowledged this search is a difficult one, but they continue to put out inquiries. He referenced an email from SEIU, and said whomever SEIU wants be considered is more than welcome to go through the process outlined on the webpage.

Ms. Roshni Sabedra said the most difficult part of the search is the residency requirement.

3. Rule 3 Revisions

Mr. Caufield reviewed the procedural history of the rules. He noted that Mr. Leavitt and Ms. Sabedra had already presented changes to the board, and any discussions (which included former Chair Breed) were in prior minutes. Mr. Cusack asked if there was a state requirement that one head custodian as selected by the labor union is on the panel. Mr. Leavitt said there is not a state requirement, but PPS has followed their practice so the union is represented with an SEIU leadership, which creates

transparency between all concerned. Mr. Tim Curtin added that PPS contacts him and he selects a senior custodian, and rotates the assignment to ensure different views.

Mr. Caufield said his one concern with the rules, based in part because of the McSwain hearing, was who conducts the interviews. He noted that part of the reason for the statute is to avoid any impropriety in hiring. He said he had no problem with any other part of the rules. Mr. Leavitt pointed out that the McSwain issue was part of Chapter 4, the promotion process, and this is a Chapter 3 issue which is initial appointment. He said that typically HR is not involved in any basic entry level interview. He said everyone goes through the same training, all the bias awareness, all the rules they need to abide by, but with the sheer number of interviews it is difficult to have an HR person at every interview. He continued by saying that he does see the merit of having HR on the team when there is a promotion for a higher level position.

Mr. Caufield thanked Mr. Leavitt for the clarification, and for the distinction between Chapters 3 and 4. Mr. Caufield said he would “might want to stew on that thought for another two weeks.”

Mr. Cusack suggested putting something in the rules that saying HR has to approve or review the questions and process so one always knows there is someone not in the department who verifies that the process is being followed. Ms. Sabedra concurred, and said she could add that wording. She added that PPS does have an HR person who reviews all the interview documents and questions, looks at all the final paperwork that comes through, makes sure everything looks good. PPS does have that process “on the front and back end of the interview process,” even though it is not necessarily required by the rules. Mr. Cusack said that putting it into the rule would make everyone be diligent. Mr. Leavitt said he had no objection to doing that, even though the reviews already being done.

Mr. Caufield said perhaps between the first and second sentence should be HR rep shall review and approve the questions to be asked in the interview and to review the final paperwork. That way even if there is not an HR person on the panel, HR is approving the methods used. Roshni said she would circulate some proposed wording.

Mr. Caufield said that would bring a certain comfort level to him, and also to those who apply. He added that in his prospective such wording would get the rule approved. He added if that could happen by the next meeting it might be possible to vote on the rule changes at the next meeting.

Mr. Leavitt said he would work with Ms. Sabedra to send out some proposed wording.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Leavitt shared with the board that PPS had entered into a contract with Nexstar Media, which is KOIN and CW networks in Portland. They have a very robust

marketing and recruiting effort. He has done a live spot talking about PPS, and Tim Curtin and Beverly Deweese worked with the KOIN team to do 15 and 30 second commercial spots on the benefits of working at PPS. He also talked about other plans for other advertising and marketing.

Mr. Caufield asked how close PPS is to having a full staff. Mr. Leavitt responded with “dismal.” He said they have 72 FT and 2 PT vacancies, and did a reduction of 13 FT staff for our 23 fiscal budget year – a 2% reduction by each department. The FTE was 378 and will now be 365. He said PPS and SEIU are currently in collective bargaining negotiations.

Mr. Leavitt added it is a challenging position to recruit for: 5 years ago we had 300-400 apply. Times have change, economy has changed, expectations have changed. He added he is proud of his team for holding employees accountable, and that the practice of holding on to “bodies who are not productive” causes more problems than being understaffed. Ms. Sabedra complimented those long-term custodians who have detailed knowledge of the building, the staff, and the students, and who are great mentors to new people.

There being no other new new business, the meeting was adjourned The next meeting was scheduled, on the rotating two week basis, for June 7, 2022.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:21.

Jo McClain
CCSB Secretary