

POLICE COMMISSION MINUTES MEETING #10

JUNE 12TH, 2024 @ 6:00 PM
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL

CALL TO ORDER:

Seven Boyer, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.

Members performed the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present were:

- Steven Boyer-Chair (term ends 04/30/2025)
- Wade Svendsbye-Vice Chair (term ends 04/30/2027)
- Karen Dinkins-Secretary (term ends 04/30/2026)
- Chief Cody Ercanbrack

The minutes from the May 8th, 2024, meeting were read. Karen Dinkins made a motion to accept the minutes of the Regular meeting dated May 8th, 2024. Second by Steven Boyer.

Motion passed.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:

No public comment.

Standing Business:

1. Police Commission emails received – Steven Boyer noted the emails received from Lacey Thompson is being handled by the mayor and it is a personal issue which looks complete. Karen will provide a list of all emails receipt from the public at the next meeting.

Public comment:

No public comment

2. Police Officer Candidate review – no new candidates to review at the present time. There was a special meeting on June 5th, 2024 for candidate review Vincent Smart. He will be sworn in at the first council meeting in July and attend the academy on August 1st, 2024.

Public comment:

Kathleen Sheffield, 512 California Ave stated as a victim's advocate, she also oversees misdemeanor cases. She just received a grant from the Montana Board of Crime Control (BOCA) for \$227,000 which goes to organizations to help prevent violence. She is also applying for an underserved grant for domestic violence. She also received a grant for \$10,000 for duplicating, specifically for books for children (i.e., judges, attorneys, bailiffs, etc. She does not have any statistics related to Libby City court which has a victim attached to it. Traffic-related situations are not included. Steven Boyer asked Kathleen if a person was a victim in another county and moved back to Libby would Kathleen help. Kathleen clarified that she only helps in cases that occurred in the county and that not all cases go to court.

Unfinished Business:

1. Qualifications Checklist for:
 - a. Caleb Thomas – Sworn in July 5th, 2023 – A commission review with the candidate will be done on Wednesday, June 19th, 2024
 - b. Don Luthey – Sworn in September 18th, 2023 – Minimum Qualifications Checklist completed on May 9th, 2024
 - c. Seth Power – Sworn in December 4TH, 2023 in private – December 18th Introduction to council. Candidate review upon his return from the academy.

- d. Vincent Smart – Sworn in July 1st, 2024 - Completed Minimum Qualifications Checklist (MQC) was done on June 6th, 2024 and given to Chief Ercanbrack.

Public comment:

No public comment.

New Business:

- Grievances and complaints –
 - Steven Boyer stated we can receive grievances and complaints, but they should be placed in a manilla envelope, sealed, and handed over to the mayor so the commission does not become involved too soon. He feels the commission should not read so the commission is not tainted.
 - Karen Dinkins stated it does not matter if the commission reads a complaint or grievance as the commission would only become involved if the outcome of the complaint is not satisfactorily handled or has a negative impact on the complainant.
 - Steven Boyer stated he wants no foreknowledge because as with the Ronald Buckner complaint and grievance he now knows that Ron Buckner is under investigation by the state.
 - Karen Dinkins explained to Steven the Buckner complaint and grievance was against the Chief and not about Ron Buckner and not sure where this information was coming from. She equated reading a complaint/grievance to reading a newspaper article, but the commission would fully investigate.
 - Steven Boyer stated he would take a complaint/grievance but will only pass off and does not want to be influenced.
 - Wade Svendsbye stated he would have no issue reading it, knowing that the mayor is the boss and would manage it. Seeing a complaint/grievance in advance would not influence him later after investigation is completed by the commission.
 - Karen Dinkins also stated she would have no issue reading a complaint/grievance as it would only come back to the commission if disciplinary action was taken, and the subject of the complaint/grievance did not feel it was appropriate. In the specific case discussed the complaint/grievance was taken from Ron Buckner against Chief Ercanbrack and would not come back to the commission unless Ron Buckner was disciplined for the complaint/grievance. Any actions Chief Ercanbrack has taken against Ron Buckner are separate from the complaint/grievance received from Ron Buckner.

Public Comment:

Caroline Buckner, 103 E Poplar said she feels it is especially important for the commission to accept complaints/grievances as with the Ron Buckner complaint/grievance nothing was done, and the state did not investigate. She does not understand Steven Boyer’s need to protect the chief. They have not seen any results regarding the complaint that was turned in. She agreed the commission should not be the first line for response, but it should come to the commission if retaliation is a concern.

Ron Buckner, 103 E Poplar stated the policies and procedures need to be amended to state, “10-day period for grievance or complaint”. Additionally, this should be discussed further when it involves a public complaint and aligned with the procedure for an employee represented by the union.

General Comments by the Commission:

Karen Dinkins – No comments

Wade Svendsbye – State again he is okay seeing a grievance or complaint.

Steven Boyer – State he has said enough already.

Public Comment:

No public comment.

The next Police Commission meeting is scheduled for July 10th, 2024, at 6:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn by Karen Dinkins. Second by Wade Svendsbye. **Motion passed.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Steve Boyer, Police Commission Chair

Wade Svendsbye, Police Commission Vice Chair

Karen Dinkins, Police Commission Secretary