

JOHNSTOWN CIVIL SERVICE
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Monday, April 20, 2026

Johnstown Civil Service Board met in a stated session for the general transaction of business. Bruce Newkirk, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The following Board members were present:

Bruce Newkirk, Chair; Michael Allen; Sue Bopp (3)

Captain Dan Price and Chief Jim McCann were also present.

MINUTES

Mr. Allen made a motion to approve the Minutes from March 16, 2026. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bopp and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

Chief McCann reported the promotional exams for Captain and Assistant Fire Chief were scheduled for April 23, 2026. Buck County Community College was contracted to administer the exams and would be sending a representative to Johnstown. He explained, in the past, the department generated the test, but he wanted to keep everything fair, which is why the grading is also outside of the department. He noted Altoona does the same thing; however, Altoona also has Bucks administer the oral interviews. Due to the cost involved, Chief McCann chose to only use Bucks for the written exam.

Chief McCann shared the individuals lined up for the oral interviews and noted they were signed off on by the union president and union secretary. He added other individuals in union leadership are taking the promotional test. He explained the civil service steps he followed in the promotional testing process. After exam results are received, the oral interview is planned for May 6, 2026. He also noted the written exam will be held in the training area at Victim Services, and the oral interviews will be held at the JARI Co-Op space on Market Street.

Ms. Bopp asked how many people were testing.

Chief McCann replied eight people were testing for Captain, and three were testing for Assistant Chief. Two people opted to not test for Captain. After final scores are received, Chief McCann would have a promotional list for the Board to sign off on.

Ms. Bopp commented the list would remain valid until exhausted.

Chief McCann noted the list would be good for two years, at which time there would be another test. The hiring list for firefighters expires in December. He explained the testing timeframe for new firefighters, noting he may talk to the union about delaying testing to the spring when the weather is more conducive. He presented the letters sent back from candidates requesting to sit as well as a list of questions for the oral exam. He noted the candidates would all answer the same five or six questions from the pool of questions. There would be no discussions between candidates regarding the interview questions.

Chair Newkirk mentioned he did not want the Board to know the specific questions ahead of time.

Ms. Bopp commented some questions would have tough answers to produce.

Chief McCann stated someone on the ground at a scene would have to make a command decision and would not have time to study the question at home.

Chief McCann stated he would like to sit down with the Board at some point to look over the civil service rules and regulations especially with regards to part-time employment. He noted the copy he had was a second draft from February 2019.

Ms. Bopp expressed surprise at how long ago the rules were last redone.

Mr. Allen stated the last time the rules were looked at the Board did the police but not fire.

Both Chief McCann and Captain Price noted their copies were not signed off on. Chief McCann mentioned he learned other third-class cities were not following civil service rules.

Chair Newkirk stated he wanted Johnstown to remain above board.

Captain Price added the police department would probably want to address their rules and regulations as well.

Chief McCann echoed earlier comments, noting he would have a list for the Board to sign in May.

Captain Price reviewed old business from the police department. Regarding the current civil service hire list, he noted the department had sent two conditional offers of employment to two people from the list. One person was starting that day, and one was slated for a start date of May 4, 2026. He further explained, out of the original four people on the list, one had been hired, two were the people previously mentioned, and the fourth was in the background check phase. Once the fourth person clears, he will be good to hire and will bring the department back to full staffing after losing one person to retirement and one who resigned for a county detective position. Overall, he noted the department was in a much better position than even a couple years ago.

Chair Newkirk asked what the timeline looked like for the last person.

Captain Price suggested he may be ready to hire in mid-May. He reviewed the number of steps in the process including various screenings and uniform sizing. He noted the person that started on April 20th was not prior law enforcement, so the training period would be more extensive compared to someone with experience.

NEW BUSINESS

Captain Price stated, because the list would be exhausted in mid-May, he would like to do another round of Act 120 testing in June or July. He preferred to give a one-month window for people to get their packets turned in. Past experience has also shown better results with a whole month. He also planned to have multiple testing dates to accommodate planned vacations. He added the nice part of doing Act 120 testing was not needing to wait seven months for a candidate to finish with the academy. In addition, Act 120 candidates have paid for the academy already so it saves the department money.

When asked by Ms. Bopp, he confirmed the department no longer offers reimbursement for the academy if the candidate completes it prior to testing and offers of employment.

Captain Price advised the Board that Chief Britton planned to speak to them regarding a change in the change of command policy with the retirement of Captain Miller. The department may adapt to a single captain by potentially adding an administrative sergeant position, thereby alleviating some of the daily administrative tasks.

Chief McCann noted a concern previously mentioned by Chief Britton at the last meeting. He asked if the Board had considered having an alternate for the Board.

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Ms. Bopp noted the Board had been requesting an alternate for a long time. She noted the suggestion had been made to talk to City Council to find a person.

Chair Newkirk noted the challenges included the Board positions being unpaid. The Board discussed potential people that could be contacted who may be interested. He noted, even with two people, there was a quorum.

Mr. Allen noted having an alternate would be nice.

Ms. Bopp noted the alternate should attend the meetings to be familiar with what is happening. She added the meetings are open to the public.

Chair Newkirk noted the public had only attended a couple of times.

Ms. Bopp noted remembering a public member attending when a hearing was held.

Mr. Allen asked what solicitor would be used if there was ever another hearing held.

Chief McCann commented he did not have an answer as the previous attorney was either going to step down or had stepped down as a solicitor for the county.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Bopp made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Allen.

There being no further business, the stated meeting concluded at 10:32 a.m.