



## City of Idaho Falls Civil Service Rules: A Timeline

- **February 2013:** Mark McBride was confirmed as the Idaho Falls Chief of Police.
- **July 2013:** In a Budget Work Session, Police Chief Mark McBride made his first request to hire more officers. The need for the officers was pertinent, but the civil service rules required the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to take several steps before the hiring process could be completed. The CSC was not functioning effectively after a change in membership. This began the discussion of a strong need to remove the civil service rules from municipal code.

Former City Councilman Mike Lehto was heavily involved in the initial discussions and remembers being frustrated with the civil service rules and the ineffective CSC. “An effective Civil Service Commission means having an applicant pool ready to go. They need to be able to act in a timely fashion when the City Council authorizes the department to hire new staff. That simply wasn’t the case at the time. After the commission membership changed, we were unable to get anyone hired in a timely fashion. We went from approximately a two month process to a much longer process,” said Lehto.

- **May 2014:** Melanie Marsh was confirmed by City Council as the Director of Human Resources.
- **July 2014:** In budget discussions, Chief McBride again requested the hiring of one additional officer, which the City Council of the City of Idaho Falls subsequently authorized and appropriated funds.
- **Late 2014:** The City HR Director, the Chief of Police and the City Attorney began discussing removal of the civil service rules. It was determined that this action would work best if it coincided with the upcoming 2015 fire contract negotiations. However, due to a heavy workload and limited resources, the City was unable to meet the 2015 negotiation deadlines. The project was deferred for another season.
- **February 2015:** A nine-member Idaho Falls Police Department Citizen Review Committee (CRC) began a review of the Idaho Falls Police Department and identify good practices and opportunities for improvement.
- **April 2015:** “Police Department employees began communicating with me about their desire to remove the civil service rules in 2013. As the discussion continued, I formally invited all

employees' input in April 2015. Only four employees responded; three were definitely opposed while one was casually opposed but willing to go along with whatever decision was made." said Chief McBride.

- **July 8, 2015:** The Citizen Review Committee (CRC) provided a report of findings from its review. The CRC noted in the report:

"The current Civil Service System is a cumbersome process that adds delay time to the already lengthy officer employment process. The civil service process also inhibits the city from attracting qualified experienced police officer applicants" (Page 7).

**The CRC report also recommended that the City "Eliminate Civil Service from the police officer employment process" and that it be replaced with a City/IFPD personnel policy.**

The CRC also recommended, "This policy change should be phased in with the details to be worked out with a designated group of internal stakeholders" (Page 8).

City Attorney Randy Fife conducted a preliminary review of the civil service rules compared to the City of Idaho Falls Personnel Manual policies and procedures. He determined that very few (if any) changes would need to be made to the personnel policy, since the Personnel Manual offers many of the same protections to all City employees (including police officers).

- **July 15, 2015:** During a Special Council Meeting (Budget Work Session), Chief McBride again requested additional staff to meet needs. "Councilmember Lehto stated in previous years the council has given approval for additional personnel but believes the Police Department has not filled those positions as directed" (Budget Work Session minutes, July 15, 2015).
- **October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015:** The City Council met in a Special Council Meeting (Special Work Session). In this session, Mayor Casper turned the meeting to Kent Granat for the presentation of the Idaho Falls Police Department Citizen Review Committee (CRC) to the City Council.  
  
(See attached Work Session minutes, pages 6-8)
- **December 2015:** City officials and stakeholders discussed the recommendations and determined whether they agreed or disagreed with the CRC recommendation and suggested an action plan for each recommendation.
- **January 2016 – July 2016:** The CRC recommendations were considered and discussed in various meetings. Due to the departure of the City Human Resources Director (Ms. Melanie Marsh), City officials concluded that any action plan implementation would need to be delayed until a new HR Director could be hired and properly informed.

- **August 17, 2016:** A lawsuit was filed against the City of Idaho Falls by seven police officers.

City Attorney Randy Fife explained, “Our office does not comment on litigation because those comments may have an impact on the case, selection of qualified jurors, public perception of the parties, and because it is the majority of the Council that speaks for the City, not our office. The City Attorney’s office has confidence in the legal system as a resource to resolve disagreements between parties.”

- **September 2016:** Ryan Tew was confirmed as the City Director of Human Resources.
- **December 2016 – February 2017:** Discussions about the CRC recommendations and removal of the civil service rules resumed with Mr. Ryan Tew’s involvement.
- **March – April 2017:** The City Council considered rescission of City’s Civil Service Ordinance by following the process specifically mandated by the Idaho Code. In addition to the public notice for open public meetings and for the meeting agenda, additional requirements included a special notice advertised in the City’s official newspaper, the Post Register, as well as the requirement that the Ordinance be considered in at least three (3) separate meetings and that the Ordinance be voted on and, if passed, read in its entirety each of the three (3) times. The Council received numerous emails, opinions, and visits (including from many police officers) on the issue before each consideration. The Ordinance was passed and read in its entirety each time. The third vote in favor of the rescission took place on April 27th. The Ordinance was officially effective on April 30th.
- **May 2017:** City personnel are currently reviewing the grievance procedure for all City employees. The review will include revisiting the CRC’s recommendations presented to the City Council in October 2015. This procedural review is expected to take time, as it will also need to involve the incoming Chief of Police, after he or she is appointed and confirmed.

**Mayor’s note:** “Having only passed just last week, implementation of any new processes have only begun for screening, hiring, evaluating, disciplining, termination, etc. for the police department. However, it is anticipated that these will closely mirror existing city-wide processes except in the instances where additional assessments or specialized skills may call for an additional evaluative process (e.g. weapons proficiency).” (Mayor Casper, May 4, 2017)