

**Minutes of Regular Meeting of the
Alexandria Civil Service Commission
September 21, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Connie Baker at 4:28 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. In attendance were Commissioners: Ms. Connie Baker, Ms. Terri Blaisdell, Mr. Michael Brewer, Mr. Donald Collins, and Mr. Charles Harvey. A quorum was present. Staff members present were: Ms. Leisa Lawson, Director of Civil Service; Ms. Mildred Price, Assistant Director of Civil Service; Ms. Candice Saucier, Compensation Analyst; Ms. Toria Banks, Examination Analyst, and Ms. LaKisha Dotson Valentine, Personnel Technician. Also present were: Ms. Monza Williams, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Deirdre Fuller, Counsel for the Commission, and Mr. Stacy Auzenne, Conflict Counsel for the Commission.

Ms. Baker read a statement regarding rights of the public to comment on matters on the agenda prior to action being taken on them, as required by the Louisiana Revised Statutes.

Ms. Baker addressed agenda item **Election of 2021-2022 Commission Chairman and Vice-Chairman**. Mr. Brewer moved that Ms. Baker be elected Chairman, and Mr. Collins seconded. On vote, the motion carried.

Ms. Blaisdell moved that Mr. Brewer be elected Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Collins seconded. On vote, the motion carried.

Ms. Baker presented the **minutes of regular meeting held August 17, 2022** for approval. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Mr. Brewer, and Ms. Blaisdell seconded. On vote, the motion carried.

Ms. Lawson and Ms. Williams reported on **filling vacant positions in the classified civil service**. As of August 31, 2022, there were 66 personnel requisitions in the Civil Service Department and 47 certified eligibility lists in Human Resources, with an average time of 28.3 days to forward a list to Human Resources. There were two (2) requests to expand certified eligibility lists, and 12 personnel requisitions were closed during the month of August 2022.

Ms. Williams reported 18 candidates were selected by the Mayor in August 2022, which included five (5) new hires, four (4) promotions, three (3) transfers, and six (6) provisional appointments. Two (2) candidates declined employment offers during the month of August 2022.

Ms. Lawson presented the **Report on Special Assignments of Classified Employees**. She reported there were 12 special assignments in effect during the month of August 2022. The Appointing Authority requested to extend four (4) special assignments for a period of 90 days. Mr. Brewer moved to extend the special assignment for a period of 90 days, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Collins. On vote, the motion carried.

Ms. Lawson presented the **Director's Report**. She congratulated Ms. Baker and Mr. Brewer on their reelection as Commission Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively. She noted that the Superintendent, Water and Superintendent, Wastewater positions were filled and the new hires were undergoing legacy training with the Superintendent, Water Operations. She also reported on the observed effect of the Sanitation career ladder agenda item from the August 2022 regular meeting.

Ms. Lawson stated there was another pending appeal. Ms. Lawson reminded the Commission to complete ethics and sexual harassment training prior to the end of the year.

Under the **New Business (No action will be taken)** agenda item, Mr. Brewer stated that he would like to address how the Commission schedules appeals. He recognized the Commission has an obligation to conduct fair and timely appeals. He stated that he would like a date certain for the Commission to hear Ms. Saucier's appeal and the second pending appeal. Ms. Blaisdell stated that she would like a date, preferably no later than September 30, 2022, to hear Ms. Saucier's appeal.

Mr. Harvey asked who removed the appeal from the agenda. Ms. Lawson stated that Mr. Auzenne could address the appeal.

Mr. Auzenne explained the appeal dated back to 2021. The attorneys involved in the appeal advised him on two occasions that the appeal had settled. Mr. Auzenne later found out that the appeal had not settled. Mr. Auzenne stated the discussion was more appropriate for executive session because the matter was in litigation and also included personnel issues.

Mr. Auzenne advised that he and the attorneys were available for the appeal hearing on October 10, 2022. The Commission stated it was available on October 10, 2022 as well.

Mr. Auzenne further explained that Ms. Saucier filed two (2) separate appeals. He stated that, without getting into the merits of the appeals, there is a perception that one appeal is completely different from the other. The Appointing Authority filed pre-trial motions to quash some subpoenas and an exception of no cause of action that Ms. Saucier does not have the right to bring one of the appeals. There was a request to hear the pre-trial motions on one date and to hear the appeal on a subsequent date.

Ms. Baker asked whether an out-of-town witness could appear via Zoom. Mr. Harvey stated the Commission had previously had a witness appear in Council Chamber via Zoom. Mr. Dara stated his preference is that the witness appear in person.

Mr. Auzenne asked what time the Commission would like to start the special meeting to hear the appeal. He suggested the Commission begin at 10:00 a.m.

Ms. Baker asked for clarification regarding the pre-trial motions and different appeals. Mr. Brewer stated he was concerned with hearing the motion to quash subpoenas for documents on the same

date as the appeals. He suggested that the Commission hear the pre-trial motions prior to the appeals. Mr. Harvey stated that the Commission needed to ensure that Ms. Saucier's attorney was involved in setting the appeals and motions. Mr. Auzenne assured the Commission that Ms. Saucier's attorney has been involved in the scheduling discussion. The Commission discussed September 27, 2022, October 3, 2022, and October 4, 2022, as possible dates to hear the pre-trial motions. The Commission indicated that it would make itself available on September 27, 2022. Mr. Auzenne stated that he would send an email to counsel regarding their availability for a hearing on the pre-trial motions.

Mr. Dara stated that Ms. Jones was not present for this discussion and that he wanted to be fair to her in setting the hearing on the pre-trial motions. Mr. Brewer requested that Mr. Auzenne contact Ms. Jones to determine her availability.

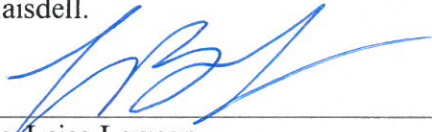
Mr. Harvey reminded the Commission that this matter was all about Ms. Saucier and asked her whether she would like to say something pertaining to the matter.

Ms. Saucier thanked Mr. Harvey and all of the Commissioners for their concern in wanting to set the appeal as quickly as possible. She stated that she had not been playing games with the Commission's time, her attorney's time, or Mr. Dara's time. She stated she wanted to bring this before the Commission since her first appeal was filed on December 8, 2021, and her second appeal was filed in March of this year.

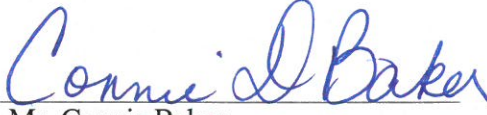
Ms. Saucier informed the Commission that she had been feeling a lot of pressure to settle. She stated that she knows that she knows attorneys like to settle because that is easier and does not take as much time or work. She stated that in some cases settlement could be for the good of everyone; however, she stated she was not convinced that settlement would benefit her or even the City. She stated that her skills and experience in civil service and human resources, some 28 years in human resources and 18 in civil service. Ms. Saucier stated she feels that benefits the City in her current role. Ms. Saucier stated that, as Mr. Harvey said, her appeals had been at considerable financial expense. She stated that the appeal had also taken an emotional toll on her. Mr. Dara objected to Ms. Saucier getting into the merits of the appeals.

Mr. Harvey asked for an update on the classification and compensation study. Ms. Lawson and Ms. Williams provided a status update.

The Commission adjourned at 5:13 p.m. following a motion by Mr. Brewer and second by Ms. Blaisdell.



Ms. Leisa Lawson
Director of Civil Service



Ms. Connie Baker
Chairman