

Snohomish City Council Special Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2023

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Redmon called the Snohomish City Council Special Meeting to order at 6:01 p.m., Tuesday, March 28, 2023. The meeting was held in hybrid format with in-person attendance at the Snohomish Carnegie, 105 Cedar Avenue, Snohomish, and remote online access via Zoom.

Roll Call:

Present: Councilmembers Lea Anne Burke, David Flynn, Karen Guzak, Judith Kuleta, Felix Neals, Tom Merrill (*remote*), and Donna Ray; Mayor Linda Redmon

2. **DISCUSSION ITEM:** Recruitment to Fill Police Chief Vacancy

City Administrator Heather Thomas explained the discussion was to receive feedback from the Council on how to proceed with opening the recruitment for a new Chief of Police-- should recruitment be for a Lieutenant or a Captain. The previous interlocal agreement (ILA) with the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) was for a Lieutenant, but that was amended to recruit a Captain, which was how the ILA was worded at this point. The budgetary difference between a Lieutenant and Captain was currently about \$30,000, but that amount could increase to \$40,000 or \$45,000 with the next contract. Job descriptions were provided in the agenda packet for Council to review the differences in experience between the two positions. Bureau Chief Scott Robertson and Snohomish Police Chief Rob Palmer were in attendance to answer questions.

Mayor Redmon expressed her preference to keep recruitment from Captains, as they tended to have more experience with operation issues, strategic planning, budget analysis, and emergency response, in addition to handling the numerous community events unique to Snohomish.

Council asked questions about and discussed several topics:

- There were more Lieutenants than Captains, thus providing a large pool of potential applicants.
- Lieutenants could be promoted to Captain, changing their eligibility or opportunities for new placement.
- Experience level of current Lieutenants and Captains; overall, the agency itself was relatively young.
- Type of training expected of Lieutenants and Captains, and impact of on-the-job experience.
- Autonomy of the position; they would be Police Chief for the City first, SCSO employee second.
- Drafting the right interview questions to help learn about experience or address other concerns; requesting detailed resumes.
- Succession planning; considering temperament and leadership skills to train and mentor the next leaders.
- Cannot adjust the ILA to consider both Lieutenants and Captains due to the SCSO's agreement with its labor groups; the City has to choose one or the other.
- One option could be to interview Captains, and if applicants do not meet City expectations, Lieutenants could then be interviewed (or start with Lieutenants, and then Captains). The ILA would not need to be amended until a selection was made.

- Caution that doing so may affect the applicant pool.
- Potential candidate experience with community policing.

Chief Robertson and Chief Palmer provided their belief that the City would have several qualified candidates to choose from, either Lieutenants or Captains, and offered to assist the City through the process.

Council continued to deliberate the benefits or detriments of Lieutenants and Captains, with Chief Robertson and Chief Palmer providing their feedback. Administrator Thomas outlined the next steps: based on Council direction, the recruitment would be opened by the SCSO with the intent of having interviews in mid- to late- April. Council action on final appointment was expected to be June 6.

Councilmembers offered their preferences on interviewing Captains or Lieutenants. After much debate over experience, tenure, potential, and budget concerns, Council narrowly favored recruiting for Lieutenants. Administrator Thomas asked for two or three Councilmembers to join the interview panel, to which Council President Merrill and Councilmembers Neals and Kuleta volunteered.

3. **ADJOURN.** There being no objection, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

APPROVED this 18th day of April, 2023.

CITY OF SNOHOMISH

ATTEST:

Linda Redmon, Mayor

Brandi Whitson, City Clerk