

Civil Service Commission Minutes

On March 6, 2024, the Civil Service Commission of the City of Amarillo met at 1:00 pm at City Hall, 601 S Buchanan, Amarillo, TX, 79101, in the City Council Chambers for a Regular Meeting.

	Present	No. Meetings Held Since Appointment	No. of Meetings Attended
Lawrence Walker, Chairperson	No	76	72
Lilia Escajeda, Vice Chairperson	Yes	18	15
Bill Harris	Yes	17	17

Also, in attendance were the following:

Mitchell Normand, Director of Human Resources

Brandon Ester, Assistant Director of Human Resources

Leslie Spear-Schmidt, Senior Assistant City Attorney

Alex Vannoy, Human Resources Generalist

Call to order: Lilia Escajeda established a quorum and called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Civil Service commission to order at 1:00 pm.

ITEM 2: Lilia Escajeda opened with the public address. Mitchell Normand clarified that those who were present and wished to speak on matters regarding the Police Corporal promotional examination would be given time later in the meeting when the commission reached that agenda item. There were no comments from the public on agenda items.

ITEM 3.A.: Lilia Escajeda considered approval of the Minutes for the meeting held on February 14, 2024. Motion made by Bill Harris to approve. Seconded by Lilia Escajeda. All in favor, motion passed.

ITEM 3.B.: Lilia Escajeda presented the approval of the list of new employees, step increases, transfers, promotions, demotions, bypasses, temporary assignments, and disciplinary actions. Motion made by Bill Harris to approve. Seconded by Lilia Escajeda. All in favor, motion passed.

ITEM 3.C.: Lilia Escajeda presented to review and consider appeals submitted by Jeremy Strickland, Whitney Conover, and Susan Carrillo for the Police Corporal promotional examination given on February 8, 2024.

Appeal 1: Jeremy Strickland was in attendance, but only noted that his submitted paper appeal for Question #23 was the only defense he had for the commission to review.

Lilia Escajeda asked for any further questions or comments from the Commission, then from the audience.

Appeal 2: Whitney Conover was not in attendance to speak to the appeal she submitted on Questions #52.

Officer Jonathan Kinnison of the Amarillo Police Department took the podium and stated that he believed all examination questions and respective answers were valid, aside from the additional correct answer included in the first appeal from Jeremy Strickland. Mr. Kinnison submitted an exhibit, including multiple documents, and provided a copy to each member of the commission. He continued by quoting Chapter 143 of the Texas Local Government Code (TLGC 143) stating that to be eligible for a promotional exam, a police officer must have served in a position immediately below the position the promotional examination is for. He outlined that salary and classification plans are the establishing factors of the hierarchy of positions in this case. He also noted that TLGC 143 defines a police officer as a paid employee who is full-time, holds an officer license issued under Chapter 1701, and regularly serves in a professional law enforcement capacity in the police department. Next, Officer Kinnison cited Section 5.01 of the Training and Personnel Operations manual of the Amarillo Police Academy that states police recruits will not be assigned any duty task requiring the carrying of firearms, enforcing the law, or other peace officer related duties until such time as they successfully complete the recruit-training curriculum of the academy. He then referenced the Amarillo Police Department website that the position of 'Recruit Officer' is noted as having a lower pay than other officers. Subsequently, he referred to the final document of the exhibit, a copy of both his own 'Recruit' ID badge and 'Patrolman' ID badge issued from the Amarillo Police Department. He noted the difference in badges and

stated that he believed this also illustrated the difference between positions. In conclusion, Officer Kinnison stated that members of the 98th Amarillo Police Academy had not fulfilled the two years required from their graduation date to the date the examination was held and therefore were not eligible to take the promotional examination. He continued to explain that there were nine members of the 98th Amarillo Police Academy that had taken the promotional exam, one of these nine being Whitney Conover who had filed this appeal.

Corporal Marcus Bettag of the Amarillo Police Department then took the podium and reaffirmed the position taken by Jonathan Kinnison, that the nine members of the 98th Amarillo Police Academy were not eligible to take the promotional examination and their appeals be dismissed. He also stated that even if the two-year requirement was waived and the two appeals submitted by Whitney Conover were accepted, Ms. Conover's score would not be considered passing (56 raw score).

Officer Jacob Charter of the Amarillo Police Department took the podium next and stated that agreed with the statements made by Jonathan Kinnison and Marcus Bettag. He further elaborated that Gail Motley of the Amarillo Police Department – Civilian Personnel had given a list of ineligible officers to Human Resources prior to the promotional examination.

Lilia Escajeda asked for any further questions or comments from the Commission, then from the audience.

Bill Harris asked the three individuals that had spoken, what relief they were seeking, and Jonathan Kinnison took the podium once more and clarified that he believed that all appeals submitted by members of the 98th Amarillo Police Academy should not be considered by the commission.

Appeal 3: Susan Carrillo and Whitney Conover were not in attendance to speak to the appeals that they had submitted regarding Question #85.

Jennifer Jones took the podium and stated that Susan Carrillo was also a member of the 98th Amarillo Police Academy and should not be considered eligible for the promotional examination in question. She also noted the Susan Carrillo's score would not be considered passing even if the appeal was accepted (57 raw score).

Mitchell Normand clarified that the Human Resources department operated under Texas Local Government Code, Chapter 143 and had used the academy start date as the defining start date of a Police Officer length of service.

Officer Thomas Frock of the Amarillo Police Department then took the podium and stated that he agreed with the four individuals that believed members of the 98th Amarillo Police Academy were ineligible to take the promotional exam and therefore their appeals should not be considered by the commission.

Officer Asher Day of the Amarillo Police Department took the podium next and stated he was a part of the 97th Academy and participated in the promotional examination but did not pass. He continued to state that he was in agreeance with the other five individuals that believed members of the 98th Amarillo Police Academy were ineligible to participate in the promotional examination and their appeals should not be considered by the commission.

Lilia Escajeda asked for any final questions or comments from the Commission, then the audience.

At 1:41 pm, the commission elected to go into an executive session and were read in by Leslie Spear-Schmidt.

At 2:05 pm, the commission returned and resumed the meeting.

Motion made by Bill Harris to accept the appeal submitted by Jeremy Strickland and to deny the appeals submitted by Whitney Conover and Susan Carrillo. Seconded by Lilia Escajeda. All in favor, motion passed.

At 2:06 pm, Mitchell Normand asked to take a short recess to gather the eligibility register for the Police Corporal promotional examination with adjustments made from the commission's decision.

At 2:08 pm, the meeting was resumed, and Mitchell Normand presented the commission with the adjusted eligibility register for the Police Corporal promotional examination.

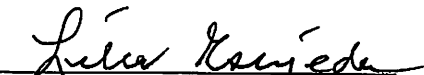
ITEM 3.D.: Lilia Escajeda considered approval of the eligibility register for the Police Corporal promotional examination given on February 8, 2024. Motion made by Bill Harris to approve. Seconded by Lilia Escajeda. All in favor, motion passed.

ITEM 3.E.: Lilia Escajeda considered approval of the eligibility register for the Police Recruit written examination given on February 24, 2024. Motion made by Bill Harris approve. Seconded by Lilia Escajeda. All in favor, motion passed.

There were no other items or discussions. Lilia Escajeda moved to adjourn at 2:09 pm.



Mitchell Normand, Civil Service Director



Lilia Escajeda, Chairwoman