

Special Meeting

April 23, 2015
12:30 p.m.

A special meeting of the Municipal Civil Service Commission convened on Monday, April 23, 2015, at 9:20 a.m. with Grady Pettigrew, Jr., Jeff Porter, and Delena Edwards in attendance.

PLEASE NOTE: These Minutes are summarized and are not actual statements made by each presenter in the meeting.

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RE: Review of the Findings and Recommendation of the Trial Board hearing held on January 21, 2015, John Brandt vs. Columbus City Schools, Appeal Number 14-BA-0015.

A motion to approve this request was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

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The Commissioners adjourned their special meeting at 9:21 a.m. to proceed with the Full Commission hearing at 10:01 a.m. on the following matter:

RE: Hearing on the merits of the appeal of Matthew Freetage vs. City of Columbus, Department of Public Safety, Division of Police from the action of the Department of Public Safety discharging him from the position of Police Officer – Appeal Number: 14-CA-0016.

Appearances were made by Natalia Harris, on behalf of the City of Columbus, Susan Thompson, on behalf of the City of Columbus, and Wesley Newhouse, Attorney for the Appellant, Matthew Freetage. Preliminary matters were handled. Opening statements were made by Ms. Harris and Mr. Newhouse. A separation of witnesses was requested.

The Commission proceeded on the following charges and specifications:

CHARGE I: You are hereby charged with violating Rule of Conduct 1.15(A)(5), General Requirements, which states, "Division personnel shall be truthful at all times."

SPECIFICATION IV: On or about November 26, 2013, you were untruthful to the Internal Affairs Bureau when you stated that CI V-1304 did not give you six Vicodin pills contained in her prescription bottle.

CHARGE II: You are hereby charged with violating Rule of Conduct 1.36, "Unbecoming Conduct," which states, "Division personnel shall conduct themselves at all times, both on and off duty, in such a manner as to reflect favorably on the Division. Unbecoming conduct is behavior that implicitly or explicitly dishonors the Division and/or its members, reflects discredit upon the individual as a member of the Division, or impairs the operation or efficiency of the Division or the individual. This includes, but is not limited to, derogatory, discriminatory, or harassing comments, gestures, or insinuations."

SPECIFICATION I: You improperly attempted to purchase Vicodin and/or Percocet pills from CI V-1304 on multiple occasions in 2013.

SPECIFICATION II: You, while on duty and in your police uniform, improperly accepted six Vicodin pills from CI V-1304, contained in her prescription bottle.

Matthew Freetage - Ms. Harris called Mr. Freetage as the City's first witness. Mr. Freetage was sworn in by Commission President Pettigrew, examined on cross by Ms. Harris, and was excused.

Sergeant John Standley - Ms. Harris called Sergeant Standley as the City's second witness. Sergeant Standley was sworn in by Commission President Pettigrew, examined on direct by Ms. Harris, examined on cross by Mr. Newhouse, answered questions by Commission President Pettigrew, examined on re-direct by Ms. Harris, examined on re-cross by Mr. Newhouse, answered questions by Commission Member Porter, Commission Member Edwards, and Ms. Harris, and was excused.

Police Chief Kimberley Jacobs - Ms. Harris called Chief Jacobs as the City's third witness. Chief Jacobs was sworn in by Commission President Pettigrew, examined on direct by Ms. Harris, examined on cross by Mr. Newhouse, answered questions by Commission President Pettigrew, examined on re-direct by Ms. Harris, answered questions by Commission Member Porter, examined on re-cross by Mr. Newhouse, and was excused.

There being no further witnesses for the City, the City rested, and Ms. Harris reserved the right to admit City's Exhibits at the end of the hearing.

Matthew Freetage - Mr. Newhouse called Mr. Freetage as the Appellant's first witness. Mr. Freetage was previously sworn in by Commission President Pettigrew. Mr. Freetage was examined on direct by Mr. Newhouse, examined on re-cross by Ms. Harris, examined on re-direct by Mr. Newhouse, answered questions by Commission President Pettigrew, Commission Member Porter, and Ms. Harris based on the questions asked by the panel, and was excused.

Confidential Informant V-1304 - Mr. Newhouse called CI V-1304 as the Appellant's second witness. CI V-1304 was sworn in by Commission President Pettigrew. CI V-1304 was examined on direct by Mr. Newhouse, examined on cross by Ms. Harris, answered questions by Commission Member Porter, Commission President Pettigrew, and Mr. Newhouse based on the questions asked by the panel, and was excused.

There being no further witnesses for the Appellant, the Appellant rests. The City moves to admit City's Exhibits A-Q, excluding P. Appellant's attorney, Mr. Newhouse, objects to City's Exhibits O, M, and N. Objection was overruled. All of the City's Exhibits were admitted.

Ms. Harris gave closing arguments for the City. Mr. Newhouse gave closing arguments for the Appellant.

The hearing was adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

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Grady L. Pettigrew, Jr., President

Date