

Minutes

Tempe Merit System Board

August 18, 2025

Minutes of the Tempe Merit System Board meeting hosted virtually via MS Teams and in person at the Human Resources Conference Room located at 20 E. 6th Street Tempe, AZ 85281 on August 18, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

<u>Boardmembers Present (via Teams):</u>	<u>Boardmembers Present (in person):</u>	<u>Boardmembers Absent:</u>
Lori Messer	Jim Foley Bill Munch	None

<u>City Staff Present (via Teams):</u>	<u>City Staff Present (in person):</u>	<u>Legal Counsel Present:</u>
None	Sarah Jenkins, Administrative Supervisor Rebecca Strisko, HR Director	Lesli Sorensen (via Teams)

Chair Bill Munch called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

1. Consideration of Meeting Minutes

Motion by Jim Foley to approve the June 27, 2025 Merit System Board meeting minutes; Second by Lori Messer.
Motion passed on a voice vote 3-0.

Ayes: Chair Munch; Boardmembers Foley & Messer
Nays: None
Absent: None

Motion by Lori Messer to approve the July 2, 2025 Merit System Board meeting minutes; Second by Jim Foley.
Motion passed on a voice vote 3-0.

Ayes: Chair Munch; Boardmembers Foley & Messer
Nays: None
Absent: None

2. Motion to Adjourn to Executive Session, if necessary

No Executive Session was held.

3. Discuss and Approve the Proposed Revisions to the City of Tempe Personnel Rules

Board Chair Munch asked Board Secretary Rebecca Strisko to address this item. Ms. Strisko said that the city will periodically revise the Personnel Rules, and, in this case, it was driven by the recently completed classification and compensation study. Other items that were revised were brought up by the Six-Sided Partners such as standby pay and the employment of relatives as it pertains to temporary employees. Previously, temp employees could not work in the same department as a relative but because there are some very large departments and some programs like lifeguards, the city will approve those exceptions on a case-by-case basis, if there hasn't been any nepotism and there isn't a conflict for that person to get hired into the department. Another change pertains to a decision made by the Arizona Supreme Court last year that the city can't provide city funds for private business, which in the city's case is union business. Through the negotiation process, the city is adding Floating Holiday Leave (FHL), which can be donated for purposes of union business. Ms. Strisko asked if there were any specific questions she could answer for Boardmembers.

Boardmember Foley asked for clarification on FHL. Ms. Strisko said that the city, previously, had Winter Holiday Leave (WHL) in varying amounts from 4 to 8 hours that could only be used during December and January, each year. There can no longer be any full release union positions, the unions would have to use their own time. Each union negotiated to give up WHL and have three (3) Floating Holidays and they updated their bylaws to require members to donate a portion of that time back to their Union. There was no further discussion.

Motion by Lori Messer to approve the City of Tempe Personnel Rules revisions; Second by Jim Foley. Motion passed on a voice vote 3-0.

Ayes: Chair Munch; Boardmembers Foley & Messer

Nays: None

Absent: None

4. Discuss and Approve Proposed Revisions to the Merit System Board Guidelines

Board Chair Munch asked Board Secretary Rebecca Strisko to address this item. Ms. Strisko said that the proposed revisions are clean up of language, for example references to the Internal Services Department, which was disestablished in 2021, updating processes to reflect current practices. For example, the guidelines referred to bringing all witnesses into the hearing so the chair could provide the admonishment, but that is not the current practice. The city attorney has reviewed the guidelines and has concerns with private hearings. By having hearings in Executive Session, it means no one is allowed to discuss the hearing so how would the city manager be able to render a decision if they are not in the Executive Session. In addition, other cities do not have the private option. There was general discussion on the language in the guidelines to ensure references to private hearings were removed. Ms. Strisko also noted that board deliberations would be in Executive Session, and the appellant could choose to participate in those, still. This will ensure that the hearings are uniform.

Boardmember Foley asked if the pre-hearing meetings are necessary. Ms. Strisko asked Board Staff Sarah Jenkins to address this meeting. Ms. Jenkins said that the pre-hearing planning meetings were to review the timelines and ensure all parties understand the deadlines, previously the Chair would confirm whether the hearing was private or public and that their attorney would be available and to confirm that the guidelines had been received. Ms. Strisko added that in some cases, the appellant chooses to represent themselves and this meeting ensures they understand the amount of work and preparation that they will need to complete. Boardmember Foley confirmed that the pre-hearing conferences were optional and asked who could call one. Ms. Jenkins said that the board chair, appellant or the city may determine the needs. In recent years, there has not been a pre-hearing conference. There was general discussion on whether this language should be updated. There was no further discussion.

Motion by Lori Messer to approve the Merit System Board Guideline revisions; Second by Jim Foley. Motion passed on a voice vote 3-0.

Ayes: Chair Munch; Boardmembers Foley & Messer

Nays: None

Absent: None

5. Discuss Board Chair Responsibilities and Selection of New Chair

Board Chair Munch asked Board Secretary Rebecca Strisko to address this item. Ms. Strisko said that the Merit System Board chair is also required to serve on the Public Safety Retirement System Boards (PSPRS), which has a much greater level of responsibility for reviewing materials and attending monthly meetings. Chair Munch said that he was having difficulty attending the monthly PSPRS meetings and wanted to open the item for discussion to see if another Boardmember would like to serve as MSB chair. Ms. Messer said that she would be available to serve as MSB chair as Thursdays were lighter workdays for her. Boardmember Foley said that attending the Thursday meetings was a sticking point for him, as well. There was no further discussion.

Motion by Jim Foley to approve Lori Messer as the Merit System Board Chair; Second by Chair Munch. Motion passed on a voice vote 3-0.

Ayes: Chair Munch; Boardmembers Foley & Messer

Nays: None

Absent: None

Ms. Strisko said that staff will contact Ms. Messer on the PSPRS requirements and process. This has been a sticking point for the chair position, and the city has discussed whether these two requirements could be split apart. Chair Munch said that he plans to continue serving on the Merit System Board, just not as chair, and will plan to attend the next PSPRS meeting if the change isn't approved by Council in time. Board Legal Counsel, Lesli Sorensen said that since the board elected a new Chair today, that is effective today, but there is a process to go through City Council for the PSPRS Board membership change.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Jim Foley. Second by Lori Messer. Motion passed on a voice vote 3-0.

Ayes: Chair Munch; Boardmembers Foley & Messer

Nays: None

Absent: None

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 a.m.



Rebecca Strisko (Apr 20, 2026 09:39:23 PDT)

Rebecca Strisko, Merit System Board Secretary