

State of Texas

County of Brazoria

City of Freeport-Civil Service Commission

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the Freeport Civil Service Commission of the City of Freeport, Texas met on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 6:00P.M. at the Freeport Council Chamber located at 430 North Brazosport Blvd., Freeport Texas for the purpose of considering the following agenda items:

Civil Service Commissioners: Tyrone Morrow, Chairman
Jose Hernandez, Vice Chairman
Kerry Moore

Staff: Danielle Kelly, DPA, City Manager,
Christopher Duncan, City Attorney
Toby Cohen, IT Director

Visitors: Nicole Mireles
Sam Reyna

Call to Order:

Chairman Morrow called the meeting of the Freeport Civil Service Commission to order at 6:03P.M. on January 21, 2026.

Invocation:

Vice Chairman Hernandez led the Invocation.

Pledge:

Chairman Morrow led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and the Pledge of Allegiance to the State of Texas.

Citizen Comments:

Sam Reyna expressed gratitude towards Chairman Morrow, Commissioner Moore and Vice Chairman Hernandez, acknowledging the time and effort they put into volunteering for the Civil Service Commission. He emphasized appreciation for the dedication shown by the members.

Discussion Items:

a. **Initial discussion regarding administrative support for the Civil Service Commission, including:**

- **Consideration of appointing the City’s Human Resources Director to provide administrative support to the Commission;**
- **Evaluation of projected costs associated with contracted clerical assistance versus utilization of existing Human Resources staff; and**
- **Assessment of current City staffing capacity to assume Civil Service–related administrative responsibilities.**

A motion was made by Chairman Morrow to table this item.

Chairman Morrow recommended tabling this item because the city's HR Director was unavailable to provide necessary information for an informed decision. He requested that the City Manager begin investigating the costs of hiring outside administrative support versus using existing city staff, noting his preference to avoid creating additional expenses for the city if possible.

Vice Chairman Hernandez raised questions about the Commission's budget and the specific support needed, particularly whether existing Human Resources staff would have the capacity for additional workload.

City Attorney Chris Duncan offered to create a task list based on the civil service code to help identify all responsibilities a director would need to handle both during startup and ongoing operations. He also noted that the Commission would need to prepare a budget estimate for City Council, as this was an unbudgeted item that would require a budget amendment.

The item was tabled pending further information.

b. Initial discussion regarding designation of the official records custodian for the Civil Service Commission, including statutory responsibilities related to record retention, public information requests, and compliance with applicable state law.

City Attorney Chris Duncan advised that the City Secretary currently serves as the official records custodian for the city and could potentially continue in this role for the Civil Service Commission. Chairman Morrow asked for an assessment of whether this would create additional workload strain for the City Secretary and if additional compensation might be appropriate if substantial new duties were added.

The item was tabled pending further information.

Chairman Morrow discussed the development of Commission protocols and emphasized a collaborative governance structure among the members. He stated that no single member serves as the leader and that decisions are made collectively through professional and frank discussions, with the shared goal of meeting the expectations of the city, police officers, and firefighters. Chairman Morrow reaffirmed that the Commission’s primary mission is to ensure a secure, efficient, and politically neutral department through permanent tenure, competitive promotion processes, and fair disciplinary procedures administered by the Commission. Chairman Morrow

explained that all Commission actions are determined by majority vote and ratified based on the individual beliefs and opinions of its members. He referenced his prior professional experience in policy development, including extensive research and authorship of policies that resulted in statewide recognition from the State of Texas for best safety and security protocols. He clarified that any materials or recommendations he presents to the Commission are offered as research-based suggestions intended for discussion and consideration, not as final determinations. Chairman Morrow stated that differences of opinion should be addressed through discussion, compromise, and collaboration, with the overarching purpose of maintaining a secure, efficient, and politically neutral department and ensuring fair and stable tenure for current staff.

Vice Chairman Hernandez concurred with Chairman Morrow's remarks and emphasized the importance of collaboration among Commission members. He stated that one of the Commission's initial priorities is the development of procedures and guidelines, which will serve as the foundational framework for the Civil Service Commission. Vice Chairman Hernandez stressed that these procedures must be accurate, thorough, and carefully developed to address potential gaps or loopholes. He emphasized the need for the Commission to take the necessary time to work collaboratively and to utilize available resources to ensure the procedures are properly established.

c. Initial discussion regarding potential engagement of outside legal counsel with demonstrated expertise in Texas Civil Service law to advise the Commission on establishment, compliance, and ongoing operations.

City Attorney Chris Duncan reported that while there are attorneys who specialize in civil service law in Texas, feedback from other cities about the value of specialized counsel was mixed. He noted he would attend a civil service conference in Waco the following week to speak with specialists and gather more information. Chairman Morrow emphasized that complex disciplinary cases might require specialized legal knowledge to ensure proper handling and to protect both the city and employees involved.

d. Initial discussion regarding the use of personal or employer-issued electronic devices (including cellular phones, computers, and electronic communication platforms) by Commission members for Commission-related business, including legal considerations related to public records, subpoenas, and discoverability under court order.

Chairman Morrow raised concerns about using personal devices for Commission business, noting that in legal proceedings, personal phones used for official business could become subject to court review and discovery.

A motion was made by Chairman Morrow for the city to provide the Commissioners (if they so want) a tablet and inexpensive cell phone to be able to conduct city business, seconded by Vice Chairman Hernandez with all present and voting "Aye" 3-0. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

A motion was made by Vice Chairman Hernandez that the city issue email addresses for the Civil Service Commission members, seconded by Chairman Morrow with all present and voting "Aye" 3-0. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

e. Initial discussion regarding stakeholder engagement necessary for effective implementation of the Civil Service Commission, including potential interviews and coordination with:

- **Dr. Kelley;**
- **Chief Howell;**
- **Chief Motley;**
- **Freeport Police Department sworn personnel;**
- **Freeport Fire Department officers and paramedics; and**
- **External municipalities or agencies currently operating under a civil service system.**

Chairman Morrow outlined the need to engage with key stakeholders including Dr. Kelly (City Manager), Chief Howell, Chief Motley, police and fire department personnel, and representatives from other municipalities with civil service systems. The Commission discussed the importance of maintaining the Open Meetings Act requirements by having only one Commissioner at a time conduct these information-gathering meetings.

City Manager Dr. Kelly asked for clarification on whether the entire Commission would conduct these interviews and who would be the point person. Chairman Morrow clarified that only one Commissioner would attend each meeting to avoid violating Open Meetings Act requirements and volunteered to coordinate the scheduling of these meetings.

Chairman Morrow offered to take the lead on arranging the stakeholder meetings. Vice Chairman Hernandez emphasized the importance of maintaining the Commission's independent status during these meetings, particularly when engaging with police and fire department representatives.

f. Initial discussion regarding prior presentations made to City Council by Chief Howell, Chief Motley, and Attorney Duncan, and the Commission's request to obtain copies of those presentations for review and reference.

Chairman Morrow requested copies of previous presentations made to the City Council by Chief Howell, Chief Motley, and City Attorney Chris Duncan. City Attorney Chris Duncan offered to email this information to the Commissioners.

g. Initial discussion regarding preliminary work completed to date by Chief Howell and Chief Motley related to:

- **Collection and review of civil service bylaws, rules, regulations, and policies from comparable civil service jurisdictions; and**
- **Identification of best practices relevant to the City of Freeport.**

Chairman Morrow noted that the Commission had already received files from Chief Howell and Chief Motley containing civil service Commission documents from other cities that they had reviewed.

h. Discussion regarding identification of external civil service agency points of contact, including request for the following information for agencies with whom coordination has occurred:

- **Name;**
- **Title;**
- **Agency name;**
- **Phone number;**
- **Email address; and**
- **Business address.**

Chairman Morrow indicated that during meetings with Chief Howell and Chief Motley, the Commission would request contact information for external civil service agencies they had consulted, so Commissioners could follow up individually if needed.

Discussion and Possible Action:

a. Discussion and possible action regarding development of a Civil Service Commission project timeline, including key milestones, deliverables, and target dates necessary to achieve statutory compliance within the required implementation period.

Chairman Morrow distributed a draft implementation timeline he had developed through research. He outlined nine key areas of civil service that need to be addressed, noting that one area applies only to larger municipalities. He explained that his proposed timeline would work systematically through each section of the civil service code over the next eight months to meet the October 1, 2026, implementation deadline.

The timeline included monthly targets for reviewing specific sections of Chapter 143, examining sample rules from other municipalities, drafting Freeport-specific rules, and consulting with the City Attorney to ensure legal compliance. Commissioners received the document for review and future discussion.

b. Discussion and possible action regarding scheduling of future Civil Service Commission meetings, including dates, times, and locations.

The Commission discussed potential meeting dates, working around existing city meeting schedules. After checking for conflicts, they determined the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 6:00 PM would work best.

A motion was made by Commissioner Moore to adopt the first and third Tuesday of the month at 6:00P.M., seconded by Vice Chairman Hernandez with all present and voting “Aye” 3-0. The Commission unanimously approved the motion.

c. Discussion and possible action regarding establishing a process to place items on the civil service commission agenda until we establish what/who will be the HR Director.

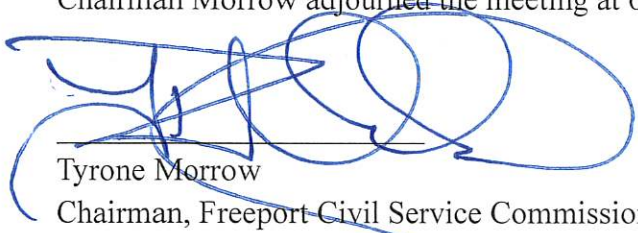
Chairman Morrow noted that until an HR Director is designated, Commissioners should submit agenda items to City Secretary Clarisa Fernandez. City Attorney Chris Duncan clarified that

items must be submitted by Wednesday at noon for the following Tuesday meeting to allow for the required three-day posting period before meetings.

Adjourn:

A motion was made by Commissioner Moore to adjourn, seconded by Chairman Morrow.

Chairman Morrow adjourned the meeting at 6:47P.M.



Tyrone Morrow
Chairman, Freeport Civil Service Commission