



**Town of Cedar Lake
Board of Safety Public Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 13, 2021 at 6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER: 6:09 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL:

Present	Joshua Govert, Member	Present	Ralph Miller, Town Council Liaison
Present	James Olthoff, Member	Present	William Fisher, Police Chief
Present	Norman Stick, Member	Present	Todd Wilkening, Fire Chief
Present	David Villalobos, Vice Chairman	Absent	Carl Brittingham, Deputy Chief Police
Present	Lester Kaper, Chairman	Present	Nick Mager, Deputy Chief Fire

ELECTIONS: Chief Fisher asked for nominations for elections.

Chairman: A motion was made by Norman Stick, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to retain Charlie Kaper as the Board of Safety Chairman. Fisher asked for other nominations, none being heard, he closed the nominations.

Govert	Olthoff	Stick	Villalobos	Kaper	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

Upon completion of the vote, Fisher handed the gavel over to Kaper to continue the meeting. Kaper thanked the Board for their selection and trust in him.

Vice-Chairman: Kaper called for nominations. A motion was made by David Villalobos, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to appoint Norman Stick as the Board of Safety Vice-Chairman. Kaper asked for other nominations, none being heard, he closed the nominations.

Govert	Olthoff	Stick	Villalobos	Kaper	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

PUBLIC COMMENT: Kaper called for Public Comment three times; no public comment noted.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES: A motion was made by Norman Stick, seconded by David Villalobos, to approve the meeting minutes of November 25, 2020.

Govert	Olthoff	Stick	Villalobos	Kaper	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

COMMUNICATIONS:

Letter to Deputy Chief Brittingham: Fisher read the letter from the family of Molly Lanham, expressing their appreciation for Brittingham's hard work, open line of communication and noting his work was "compassionate" and "above and beyond". Fisher stated Brittingham's work on this homicide case was vital in not only locating the two victims of the homicide case but also bringing to justice the person who committed the crime. Wilkening added that day they had one of the largest fires they had in a long time and Brittingham had been working with the Fire Department on the arson case at their side while he

was working on this homicide case as well. Wilkening endorsed his commendation was not only well-deserved and noted he was a good team player.

A motion was made by Jim Olthoff, seconded by Josh Govert, approve the letter of commendation for Deputy Chief Brittingham.

Govert	Olthoff	Stick	Villalobos	Kaper	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

Donations: Fisher read the four donations received including \$250 from Holiday Liquors and \$400 from Schilling to be utilized for the UTV installation of a storage box, skid plate protectors and yearly maintenance. A total of \$22,000 was received from Crown Point Community Foundation, of which \$10,000 was for the Police Department to obtain cameras (at almost \$500 per camera) and other necessary equipment and \$12,000 for the Fire Department to obtain cutter/spreader jaws and a saw for extrication. Wilkening added Schillings had made a donation of \$400 to the Firefighters Association. Wilkening noted that he would not be pursuing the Safer Grant without the endorsement from the Town Council. Kaper reminded the Board there was a Cedar Lake Community Foundation.

FINANCE:

Police Department: Fisher stated no purchase orders were done in November or December due to them closing out the books for the end of the year. He provided an update on items that needed done including, Unit 44 needing water pump repair in the amount of \$1600; Unit 48 needed a fuel float assembly, ignition coil and thermostat for \$543.90; Unit 54 required electrical power steering pump for \$1000 with 3-year warranty; and Ford Explorer was also needing a water pump. He noted the water pump work was expensive because it required half engine rebuild because of the location. Kaper noted the need to rotate out cars.

Fire Department: Wilkening noted annual service work was completed in November and December including oil changes, brakes and adjustments. Aerial apparatus & engine had work completed. The 1212 Township vehicle had brake work done, in which the Township paid for. Deputy Chief Mager's vehicle needs to have \$2200 worth of electrical work done for an ABS Brake not working and the vehicle not being under warranty. They are awaiting pricing and availability of parts for Mager's repair.

TRAINING – December 2020:

Police Department: Fisher reviewed the training provided to his staff for a total of 82 hours during the month of December including Active Shooter, At-Scene Crash/Traffic Homicide Investigation and Generational Differences. He stated two certified instructors – one will be a defensive tactics instructor and the other will be firearms instructor.

Board members discussed follow up on training modules and possible feedback from participants.

Fire Department: Wilkening reviewed the training provided to his staff noting a total of 4916 trainings for the year. He stated they had a total of 1525 calls for 2020, which he felt the numbers were down due to COVID.

OLD BUSINESS:

Police Department:

1. New Vehicle Updates: Fisher provided the new Durango should be coming in soon. He stated he had a meeting to discuss budget plans for other vehicles with the goal of

purchasing 4 Durango vehicles. Fisher clarified for Stick that he felt these vehicles were better suited for storage, equipment, comfort and driving in the weather/snow.

2. New Recruits Updates: Fisher stated Kamstra was in field training. Dills has started the academy and should be completed in May.
3. Other: Fisher reported the department's boat was being repaired and should be complete by April. Fisher confirmed for Stick that taser replacement was necessary and they were looking to see how many would be needed, what company and pricing. They currently cost about \$1300-1500 and would need 26 of them. He indicated Axon had provided pricing, however it was when they were going to utilize them for cameras. Pricing was provided with a 6-year lease program at \$700 each, making it roughly \$60,000 a year. Fisher confirmed they are tested each shift and reports downloaded quarterly. If a taser is not functioning properly, it is turned in to the taser instructor, who is the training coordinator. Fisher confirmed for Villalobos that 26 tasers has lasted the department 16 years. He noted they would have to find funding for this purchase.

Fire Department:

1. New Ambulance Update: Wilkening reported the ambulance was still in production and all the equipment needed for it has come in. One of the power loaders will be installed into the old ambulance. Medics love the new monitors and 2 new power load cots. Wilkening stated that in the past, they had donated their old vehicles to Public Works to be used as a camera truck, dump bed or flat body vehicle. Wilkening clarified for Stick that the units are rotated out 2 weeks at a time for better wear and tear. Wilkening confirmed for Stick that the cost to re-chassis the oldest ambulance would be \$150,000 because the box was still in really good shape.
2. Equipment Update: Wilkening stated the Town Council had met with the Township Trustee, noting they did not want to finance a truck. He noted Trustee Toth sent him specs for the tanker truck bid process and provided a brief review of this process with the Board. He explained to the board that with the growth of the Town and the Town's situation with water, they need to be able to provide water to locations quicker. This tanker would accommodate 3,000 gallons of water, contain a commercial chassis and two people can ride in it. Wilkening noted air packs would need to be replaced soon and cost \$6,000-8,000.
3. Part Time Employees: Wilkening noted the Town Council did increase their salary for the full-time personnel, noting starting wages for a Paramedic at \$18.87 with the going rate at \$20-21 and EMT at \$14.75 with the going rate at \$16. POCs would be part-time instead of on-call. Wilkening confirmed for Kaper volunteers were paid \$15 per call, but preferred \$15 per hour, with officers making more. Wilkening clarified for Stick that the average call was less than an hour, average structure fire was 3-4 hours and car with extraction was 1-2 hours, noting none of the times included clean up time.
4. Policies: Wilkening stated he was working with Fisher on Lexipol. He stated he would like to work on a policy regarding disparity between Chief, Deputy Chief and ranking officers to stretch out salaries for incentives regarding promotions. He spoke about the desire of completion of response policies and personnel matters policies for disciplinary measures being included. Wilkening clarified for Villalobos that daily minimum staffing and how to fill open shifts had been a concern. He explained the importance of policy for commitment and operation during mutual aid. Stick and Wilkening felt a 5-year plan would be beneficial to include staffing, equipment and salaries. Wilkening stated they are starting to see movement forward with the continued growth of the community.

5. Other: Miller stated Clerk-Treasurer Sandberg had attained a grant to obtain funding for equipment for the Police and Fire Departments. He noted Cedar Lake had collected 96% of their tax rate. Wilkening and Fisher spoke about recurring line items. Wilkening noted his item was bunker gear; Fisher noted his was vests.

NEW BUSINESS:

Police Department:

1. Monthly Activity Report: Fisher reported a 2020 total number of calls of 12,521, noting a total of 677 calls in December, of which 11 were Town Ordinance Violations, 180 warnings and 10 arrests.
2. Quote from James Auto for Oil Changes: Due to the Town Mechanic retiring, quotes were attained for the fleet of vehicles including \$40/car for oil changes and filters and \$10 for tire rotations. Villalobos inquired of pricing of oil by the barrel. It was stated \$1400 per quarter.
3. Administrative Assistant Position: Fisher reported interviews had been completed, an offer had been extended and they were moving forward with a selection.
4. Lexipol Update: Progress has been rapid and the goal is completion by April 1.
5. Other: Kaper stated they needed to change the meeting date so that legal representation could be available. He noted the options as either on the 1st or 2nd Monday of the month. Wilkening stated Mondays don't work for him as those are the Fire Department meetings. Fisher explained the new Town Manager was attempting to streamline the meeting schedule and changes had been made at the beginning of this year to accommodate that. Kaper asked for this item to be added to the next agenda as Old Business.

Fire Department:

1. Monthly Activity Report: Wilkening reported 158 calls and their yearly totals were up. He clarified for Villalobos that they were not able to get a true number of calls related to COVID cases, as those calls could not be added as a sub-category for reporting. He stated they have COVID calls every day. Villalobos expressed his concern for transport of patients and extra burden of cleaning and time. Wilkening stated a good number of the calls indicated as breathing trouble were COVID related. He noted 1500 calls last year and felt the number would have been higher but some residents stopped calling in fear of having to go to the hospital during the onset of COVID. Wilkening confirmed for Villalobos that 2000 calls would be difficult for his current staff and he would rely on mutual aid if they were 2-3 calls deep. Wilkening confirmed for Olthoff there were 4 on shift, additional administration during the day and volunteers covering chaser calls. Wilkening confirmed for Kaper that mutual aid generally came from Lake Dale, Crown Point, Lowell and other surrounding communities as needed and the Dive Team from Portage assists.
2. New Hires/Employee Retention: Wilkening stated two positions were posted through the end of the month to fill firefighter/EMT and firefighter/paramedic. He stated one who applied had taken a job elsewhere and the demand for paramedics is high.
3. Raises: Wilkening expressed his appreciation to the Town Council for providing raises for his department, but felt one more was needed.
4. Promotions: Wilkening felt ranking officers were needed since others have left. He indicated he had only two that currently qualify, meet the training requirements and would provide continuity within the department.

A motion was made by Norm Stick, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to approve promotion of Chris Craft from firefighter to Lieutenant and Matthew Sella from Captain to Battalion Chief.

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Wilkening asked Moore to add these promotions to the Town Council's January 19, 2021 agenda for transparency and as a courtesy, also noting that the salaries had already been approved.

5. Volunteers Academy: Wilkening indicated he had two in the fire academy which required 6 months of training where they meet two nights a week and every Saturday all day. He noted Fire Chiefs meet every other Monday. He stated there would now be a Fire Chief's Academy, similar to that of law enforcement, where every new Fire Chief would attend a 40-hour class in order to be Chief. He stated he has been Chief for 17 years and would like to attend for items to be learned and would all of his Chiefs to be able to attend, noting the cost is free.
6. Dispatch: Wilkening spoke of delays and a plan of correction between Lake County and Southcom on mutual aid requests. Technology and training are in progress to increase continuity. Wilkening confirmed for Olthoff there was not a separate dispatch for mutual aid calls. Members expressed their interest in touring/observation of Southcom once COVID restrictions are lifted.
7. Other: Discussions took place regarding having board members volunteer as a liaison for meetings with Lexipol with the Police and Fire Departments. Villalobos volunteered to do the Police Department and Olthoff for the Fire Department. Miller confirmed these meetings would be separate and they could have no more than two members present.

VIPS REPORT: Nothing to report at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Douglas Ferguson (13330 Edison Street) addressed the Board and asked who the Chief Fisher and Deputy Chief Brittingham's superiors were and who he could file a complaint with. He stated he felt his concerns were not being addressed. Kaper advised Ferguson to put his concerns/complaints in writing, addressed to the Public Safety Board Chairman, deliver it to the Town in a sealed envelope and they will get it to him for the board to look over. Kaper confirmed for Ferguson's inquiry regarding police officers having body/dash cameras that the Town does not currently issue them cameras, however some of the officers have purchased them themselves for their own protection. Fisher told Ferguson if he makes an official request and the officer has a personal body camera, they would provide him with a copy of it, as State Law requires. Fisher clarified for Ferguson that he could not be charged with disorderly conduct for having a camera. Ferguson stated he felt it was important for the officers to have cameras for their own protection as well; Fisher agreed. Ferguson asked where he could obtain copies of the figures that were discussed earlier regarding the stats of the department. Fisher stated they were all online on the Town's webpage.

ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by David Villalobos, seconded by Josh Govert, to adjourn the meeting.

Govert	Olthoff	Stick	Villalobos	Kaper	Vote
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	5-0

TOWN OF CEDAR LAKE BOARD OF SAFETY

Lester Kaper, Chairman

Norman Stick, Vice-Chairman

Joshua Govert, Member

James Olthoff, Member

David Villalobos, Member

ATTEST:

Sarah Moore, Recording Secretary