



Town of Cedar Lake Board of Safety Public Meeting Minutes Wednesday, January 26, 2022 at 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Chief Fisher called the meeting to order at 6:14 pm and requested a moment of silence for Lake County Sheriff's Lieutenant Bryan Kersey who recently passed away.

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	David Villalobos, Member	Present	Todd Wilkening, Fire Chief
Present*	Norman Stick, Vice Chairman	Absent	Carl Brittingham, Deputy Chief Police
Present	Lester Kaper, Chairman	Absent	Nick Mager, Deputy Chief Fire

*Members present electronically (via Zoom).

ELECTIONS: Chief Fisher asked for nominations for elections.

1. **Chairman:** A motion was made by David Villalobos, 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. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0.

Upon completion of the vote, Fisher handed the gavel over to Kaper to continue the meeting.

2. **Vice-Chairman:** Kaper called for nominations. A motion was made by Jim Olthoff, seconded by David Villalobos, to retain Norm Stick as the Board of Safety Vice-Chairman. Kaper asked for other nominations, none being heard, he closed the nominations. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0.

Kaper noted for the record to reflect the attendance of Town Attorney David Austgen.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Kaper called for Public Comment three times; none received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for Wednesday, December 22, 2021: A motion was made by Jim Olthoff, seconded by Norm Stick, to approve the meeting minutes. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0.

VIPS REPORT

1. **December 2021 & 2021 Annual Report:** Lieutenant Layer reviewed the December 2021 report noting a total of 56 hours between members, stating one member was on family leave due to COVID and a mother passing away. Layer reported total number of hours for 2021 as 1079 hours.
2. **VIPS Recruits:** Lieutenant Layer indicated he had two members for consideration. He stated that one member was present tonight and the other could not be present but asked that they consider his approval as well. Layer explained both members were retired and would not be available during summer months. Layer introduced William Horn. Horn, who is a resident of Cedar Lake,

stated he was a First Responder for New York Fire Department for 10 years doing interior and exterior attack; was driver trainer Captain of Rescue 7; drove pumpers, ladder trucks, rescue trucks and water rescue; and was Fire Police Captain with a crew under him for traffic control. He stated he is retired and moved to the area in 2017 to be closer to family. He stated his wife was also a First Responder and was interested in joining VIPS after she sees how things go. He stated his reasoning for service is wanting to help, give back to the community along with supporting the fire and police departments and that he has some time on his hands to do so.

Chief Fisher reported to Kaper that he and Lieutenant Layer met and, after finding it difficult to recruit members for VIPS, they did some research and pursuing those who are on the retirement scene that could be available to contribute time. He indicated that with that, there are some that may not be available during times. He and Layer agreed that if members needed to leave to travel or be off for an extended period of time, they would put them on leave.

Fisher stated there was a mix up in the time for the second candidate and asked that the Board approve both applicants together. Layer reviewed Brad Mitchell's application with the Board, stating he is a retired UPS driver, worked with VIPS in Munster, is a resident of Cedar Lake but is a summer camper as well.

A motion was made by Jim Olthoff, seconded by David Villalobos, to approve William Horn and Brad Mitchell as VIPS members. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0. Members thanked Horn for his volunteering to assist.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. **Police Department:** Chief Fisher indicated no communication reports at this time.
2. **Fire Department:** Chief Wilkening reported setting up an Open House for Town Council, Board of Safety and Redevelopment Commission Members for Monday, February 21, 2022 at 6 pm.

FINANCE: Purchase Orders (December 2021) & Grants

1. **Fire Department:** Chief Wilkening reviewed the one purchase order, noting the pump on the brush truck needing replaced at a cost of \$10,097.50. He indicated the truck is out of service currently as they are waiting on parts. Wilkening confirmed to Villalobos that they were unable to recover any funds for scrap due to it being a foreign brand and difficulty in finding parts based on its 1994 age. He stated the truck is in great shape otherwise and they did not want to get rid of it.
2. **Police Department:** Chief Fisher reviewed the one purchase order, noting the PO system shuts down in December in order to close out the financial books. In conjunction with the Clerk-Treasurer, a new motor and hydraulic unit for the back of the public safety boat was able to be purchased. The boat was refurbished last year with everything except the motor. This will give the boat another 20 years of use and they were able to attain a great price.

STAFFING

1. **Police Department:** Chief Fisher reported COVID effected the department, but all are back to work. On February 1, the Town Council will be swearing in Benjamin King and invited the Board to attend, if available. Fisher reported to Kaper that the two new recruits were in Phase 3 of training, where they take calls on their own with a Field Training Officer sitting with them to observe and be available for any questions. He stated it was a phase where extra training can be provided, if necessary, before they are released on their own.

2. **Fire Department:** Chief Wilkening reported 4 or 5 staff out with COVID but back to duty. He indicated he has one full time staff person needing a procedure that will require them being off 8 weeks. Wilkening commended those staff that stepped up during staffing shortages, noting that despite all the long, extra hours, he heard no complaints. Wilkening stated there is one going through the PERF process, who's paperwork was sent downstate in late December. He indicated that staff person was hired as part-time but working full time hours to help cover shifts. He stated the three volunteers the Board met have been in the academy for three weeks and doing well. He reported one application received that he would bring before the Board for interview.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Police Department

a. Equipment Updates

1. **Watch Guard:** Chief Fisher reviewed the Watch Guard quote for 27 body and car cameras with software and 5-year service package totaling \$317,130, with monthly payments of \$5285.50 or \$15,856.50 quarterly. Fisher stated they received a grant for \$79,000 to help cover some of that cost. He stated the plan would be to use the first \$13,000 to install equipment in the squad cars and incidentals, then use the remaining for the first-year payment. He stated this has been presented to the Town Council with the assistance of the Town Attorney based on recent incidents pointing out the necessity for the cameras. He noted the Town Council President directed the Clerk Treasurer to help try to find more funding to help offset costs. Fisher thanked Town Attorney Austgen for the backing on this project. Kaper asked when the department grew if there was an opportunity to purchase more individually. Fisher stated that additional products could be added, clarifying the quote was for the bundled package and would be integrated with the Spillman system the department uses.
2. **Vehicles & Financing:** Chief Fisher reviewed quotes he received from three companies for vehicles, indicating the goal was to purchase 5 vehicles. Fisher stated he spoke with a representative from Thomas Dodge, who had the lowest bid, about another department that backed out on vehicles that were all ordered as black. He was going to reach out to see if they could change at least two of them to white and he would know by the end of the week if that was possible. If they are able to order in white, we would be able to attain the pricing at last year's price, which would be \$7,000 less than this year. He spoke to the Clerk Treasurer who was on board with financing for at least two of them now and would have enough money to finance 4 total all-wheel drive, 6-cylinder Dodge Chargers, which would take approximately 6 months to get in. Villalobos wondered if it would be worth looking into the cost of a new paint job to save the money. Fisher stated he was not sure of the cost of a paint job but it might be worth looking into.

- b. **Training Updates:** Chief Fisher reviewed the training report noting the report contained all training for the year and read through entries for the month of December including Mobile Data Operator Certification, Vigilant training for the entire department on the license plate reader program and firearms qualifications.

2. Fire Department

- a. **Equipment Updates:** Chief Wilkening reported the Mager and Craft would be attending training on the new tanker and the Township will have the vehicle delivered to the

department, which has not been scheduled yet. Chief Wilkening reported there would be a 20-hour training program for the rest of the department put on by Mager and Craft to go over the new tanker and how to drive and operate it. He indicated there would need to be a lot of drive time on the vehicle as it will be dangerous to drive with the heavy weight totaling over 3,000 gallons of water when full. Wilkening confirmed for Kaper that when it goes out on a call, it is totally full of water. Wilkening confirmed for Austgen that refill occurs through clean source water such as hydrants. Wilkening indicated \$35,000 of electric/battery-operated rescue tools were ordered and should be arriving within the next week. He indicated that Stan's Auto Body would be providing them with some vehicles that they can do training with the new tools. Wilkening reported the Fraternal Order of Eagles wrote a check in the amount of \$9,600 for training aid. He stated the fund raiser started with Amy Early about the possibility of attaining EMS simulators and she and Pat Scoleri provided a \$10,000 estimate for the cost and package. He reported that this is a great tool for the department and extremely appreciated by the EMS team and entire department. The fire side of the department will be looking for training aides as their next project. Wilkening reported the department purchased lockers, chairs and recliners for the recreation area upstairs. Austgen stated there was no more underappreciated organization in this town than the Eagles organization and felt they should be recognized. Kaper indicated Moore prepared a letter that all five Board members signed. Wilkening confirmed a letter sent and noted a plaque would be placed in their training room noting their continued support. He stated a photo opportunity was forthcoming when the plaque is available with staff present, possibly during the Open House. Wilkening noted that Town Council did approve spec process for the new firetruck to move forward.

- b. **Training Updates:** Chief Wilkening reviewed the year end report for the 2021 year along with review of the month.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Police Department

- a. **Monthly Activity Report:** Chief Fisher reviewed the monthly call report noting 1,072 calls for the month and 13,159 for the year. He stated they had 310 arrest and 556 charges filed for the year. There were 3,363 warnings for the year and 1,771 citations. Fisher confirmed that the Code Enforcement Officer does not issue citations related to the Building Department now, only Town Ordinance related to items such as tall grass, abandoned vehicles, etc. Multiple discussion ensued over reporting of individual stats. Kaper asked if there could be more information provided at the next meeting for what type of ordinance violations were received including citations or warnings.
- b. **2021 Use of Force Annual Report:** Chief Fisher stated that while reviewing policies, it was required that an annual Use of Force Report be submitted to the Board. Fisher reviewed the report with the Board.
- c. **Lexipol Recommended Policy Update: #208 – License to Carry a Handgun:** Chief Fisher stated the changes made to this policy were to reflect the State of Indiana's elimination of fees associated with permitting.

A motion was made by David Villalobos, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to adopt the changes. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0

- d. **Lexipol Recommended Policy Update: #1106 – Drug & Alcohol-Free Workplace:** Chief Fisher stated the changes to this policy were regarding inclusion of medical cannabis, noting that possession or use of medical cannabis is prohibited. Fisher confirmed for Villalobos that there would be no consideration of use while off-duty.

A motion was made by David Villalobos, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to adopt the changes. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0.

- e. **Lexipol Recommended Policy Update: #1110 – Personnel Complaints:** Chief Fisher stated this policy had an addition to the policy, reading its entirety, including noting at-will and probationary employees being disciplined and/or released from employment without adherence to any of the procedures in policy. Fisher confirmed to Villalobos that Lexipol recommended this change. Town Attorney Austgen addressed Kaper with his concern for not having enough time to review this policy and asked Chief Fisher to discuss this with him. Kaper stated this item will be deferred until legal counsel reviews.
- f. **Lexipol Recommended Policy Update: #1127 – Temporary Modified Duty Assignments:** Chief Fisher read the change in its entirety, regarding probationary employees assigned to temporary modified-duty being allowed an extension, if necessary.

A motion was made by David Villalobos, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to adopt the changes. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0.

2. Fire Department

- a. **Monthly & Annual Activity Report:** Chief Wilkening reviewed the monthly and annual call report noting they set a record with 1,833 calls, which was up from 1,500 calls last year. He noted December call total at 193.
- b. **EMS Billing Updates:** Chief Wilkening reported Town Council finalized and approved EMS and Fire Billing. They are in full force with billing.
- c. **Equipment Out of Service – Main Line Engine:** Chief Wilkening reported the township engine was out of service for 9 days waiting on parts, noting the manufacturer is out of business and the parts are getting more difficult to find.
- d. **New Fire Truck Specs:** Chief Wilkening reported they are working on getting specs together.
- e. **Baby Box:** Chief Wilkening stated CLFD is being considered for a baby box and explained that if someone had a baby that is not wanted, the person is able to drop the baby off in the box, which is attached to the building. This sets an alarm off through the dispatch center to the fire department or EMS that there is a baby in the box. The staff person is able to access the baby from the inside. Wilkening confirmed to Kaper that 1-800-BoardUp as well as another community foundation sponsor the project. He noted the installation would need to be donated and there were 8-10 boxes throughout the county with the nearest one being in Crown Point. He explained the box is heated/air conditioned, anonymity of the person dropping the child off as there would be no camera allowed to be placed on the box, along with the child is safe. Wilkening confirmed for Villalobos that babies would be accepted at the station, if they did not want to place it in the box, but the anonymity would be gone.
- f. **Lexipol Policy Update/Distributed:** Chief Wilkening reported he has distributed all of the policies to his staff and they are in the process of reviewing them. Wilkening asked the Board if there were minor spelling or grammatical errors, did they need to be brought

back to the Board for re-review. Kaper indicated if there was a spelling error, he felt it did not need to be brought back, but if there was wording change then it should be re-reviewed. Town Attorney Austgen indicated if the policy was being “cleaned up” it probably did not need reapproved. Chief Fisher indicated that if the wording changed the policy, he brought it back before the Board. He noted if it was spacing issues or something misspelled, he did not.

g. Training Room: Chief Wilkening reported the room is almost complete.

- 3. New Building Update:** Chief Fisher reported it is still in early stages and Veridus was working on items to be reviewed by Town Council in February. Chief Wilkening reported some individuals have reached out to them asking about architecture and how the fire department operates.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Kaper called for Public Comment three times; none received.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion made by David Villalobos, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to adjourn the meeting. All members voted in favor to adjourn the meeting. Kaper called the meeting adjourned at 7:17 pm.

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