



Town of Cedar Lake Board of Safety Public Meeting Minutes Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Norm Stick called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION: Chaplain Ken Puent provided the invocation.

ROLL CALL:

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

*virtual attendance

PUBLIC COMMENT: Chairman Norm Stick called for Public Comment. Chaplain Ken Puent 71 invited everyone to a chili cookoff event that would include the Police and Fire Departments, to be held on Saturday, May 20 from 4-6 pm at St. Michael Archangel Church, with proceeds to be determined. Puent also reported that he and Chaplain John attended the law enforcement chaplains' annual event and training in Akron, Ohio. He felt the training was beneficial and gave them more awareness on how to be supportive and assist staff.

Stick called for Public Comment three times; none received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for Thursday, February 16, 2023 Public Meeting: A motion was made by Jim Olthoff, seconded by David Villalobos, to approve the meeting minutes. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0.

VIPS REPORT: Chief Fisher reported that Lieutenant Layer off with COVID. Fisher reviewed the report for February including 4 callouts, 1 accident, 23 hours of patrols details, and 24 hours of miscellaneous. Fisher noted Mr. Vandiver was excused from his hours for the month due to the birth of his baby.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Equipment: Stick asked if Board members had any comments regarding the K9 Program. Olthoff noted that a donation of a free dog with little cost to the department was a great thing. A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by Josh Govert, to send Favorable Recommendation to the Town Council to move forward with the canine (K9) program. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0. Kaper asked Fisher to give an explanation of what would be happening next. Fisher stated the officer was selected. A local business person donated the entire cost of a police canine, all of the training, purchase of the dog, and the in-car kennel. The department will pay the handler's salary and food cost while he is at training at FM K9, noting housing would be at the training facility which was included in the

training. The donor, who contributed to the local business, is from Pennsylvania and would fly in for presentation of the canine after training to the Council. Fisher reported more donations are coming in, now that people have learned the department is obtaining a dog, noting that they would not have to purchase food or equipment. Fisher confirmed to Kaper that anyone who wishes to make a donation to the canine program, could send money to the department and it would be placed in the non-reverting fund, which would need to be established through ordinance through the Town Council.

Stick asked Fisher to provide an update on the purchase of vehicles. Chief Fisher reported meeting with Clerk Treasurer Sandberg and Corby, the financial advisor, regarding vehicle breakdowns/repairs and the desire to move forward with the purchase of the departments four vehicles this year. Fisher clarified for Stick that the price of the cars went up, indicating to outfit the squad car and the car total purchase would be about \$56,000, noting the purchase of the same squad in 2019 was \$38,000. Fisher confirmed to Villalobos that the town's financial advisor confirmed the purchase as feasible, stating it had been included in the sustainability plan for four vehicles this year and next year would include five due to increase in staff. A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to send Favorable Recommendation to the Town Council to move forward with vehicle purchases. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0.

Communications: Chief Fisher read the email communication received from Red Cedars School Principal Dr. Ryan Eckart thanking Corporal Jason Allande for his work with an emotionally disabled student. He reported a thank you card received from Corporal Pennington's family for flowers received for his father's funeral. He reported receiving a thank you left at the station from a vet tech by the name of Laura thanking Corporal Machalk and Officer Lewis for their compassion and humanity regarding a situation with a cat needing put down hit on the road.

Finances – Purchase Orders, Expenditure Reports & Grants: Chief Fisher reported presenting a check to the Northwest Indiana Cancer Kids Foundation in the amount of \$4,000 at the March 7 Town Council meeting. He thanked all of those who helped raise the funds including the Cedar Lake Eagles who were a large contributor that helped the department achieve their goal.

Fisher reported receiving a grant from the Crown Point Community Foundation for \$2,500 to be used for the purchase of shields. He explained a situation where an officer was involved with a suicidal subject in Robin's Nest and the only thing between the two of them was a wall. He felt shields would greatly benefit the department for situations like that and stated there were enough funds to purchase 5 shields – one for each supervisor and one on station.

Staffing: Chief Fisher provided an update on the Employee Assistance Program, Wellness Program & Policy, and Peer Support Team, noting components of these programs overlapped and would provide additional support services to the department. Fisher introduced Social Worker Intern Mona Garcia, present in the audience, to the Board. He noted the intention is that after she obtains her degree, the department would try to get her hired on as a police social worker to assist in the department, with fire department calls and the community. Fisher stated funding sources to assist with the salary were being researched, including a recent meeting with HealthLinc. He explained that Griffith PD has a social worker and it is becoming more common for social workers

to be part of police departments. He indicated that Garcia and Moore had been working to develop an EAP for the town, Peer Support Team, and Wellness Policy/Program. Stick noted he has been following this and indicated Garcia and Moore had been doing a great job. Fisher stated that while reviewing the Conditional Offer of Employment Contracts there was a possible minor change needed and has sent it to the Town Attorney for review.

Chief Fisher requested from the Board a recommendation to the Town Council for moving forward with an Emergency Hire selection. Stick indicated an officer resigned and the Board authorized the Chief to advertise for an emergency hire. Fisher confirmed for Stick the applications were received for two weeks and only one response was obtained. Stick the applicant was interviewed prior to the public meeting. A motion was made by David Villalobos, seconded by Charlie Kaper, to send Favorable Recommendation to the Town Council to move forward with the Emergency Hire of applicant Nicholas Enyeart. Attorney Austgen recommended that the motion be conditional upon review of the legal citation. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0.

Training Report: Chief Fisher reviewed the report noting the Post Traumatic Stress training that he, Deputy Chief Brittingham and Patrol Commander Kidd attended was one of the best post-traumatic stress trainings they had attended, which complemented Peer Support and EAP programs the department was work on. Fisher reported new officer Stolarz attended pre-basic classes and is starting to work the road. He confirmed to Stick that she is very excited. Olthoff inquired about the Active Shooter training. Fisher indicated the Town of St John in conjunction with the county SWAT Team provided an active shooter scenario training with children present in the school, including the parents. They determined they needed more personnel, it went really well and learning more about Incident Command. Fisher reported training with Red Cedars school today involving a mock gas leak/reunification drill including students, staff and parents in a slow, methodical manner to see how it would function. He noted that if a mass incident happens, chaos would make this process more rapid. Fisher recognized Director of Security Mike O'Donnell for doing a great job with this drill. Fisher reported that he and Chief Wilkening are meeting tomorrow to review Straticite to complete the program. Wilkening stated this plan has been worked on for quite some time. Fisher stated the program would be available on officer's laptops or phone, but the program is not available to the public. Assisting agencies would have the ability to view the map site to avoid coming into a hot situation.

Equipment: Chief Fisher reported quite a few equipment repairs, noting items were itemized in the Purchase Order Report.

Monthly Activity Report – CLPD Monthly Report & Code Enforcement: Chief Fisher reported 1211 total calls for service for the month and 44.21 calls per day; 164 state citations, 633 warnings for the month; 29 total arrests; 50 charges including 35 misdemeanor, 7 felony, and 8 warrants for a total of 58 arrests for the year and 97 charges filed. Fisher indicated new reports were included: Traffic Stop Analysis, Warning Analysis, Citation Analysis, Law Incident Analysis, Arrest Analysis and Arrest Offense Analysis. Fisher, noting Villalobos had requested comparison numbers last month, added IT Director Wroe created new reports to compare months and years and these reports would be received in the packets monthly. Villalobos thanked Fisher and stated it provides better perspective of the increased demands of the department.

Lexipol Recommended Policy Update: Attorney Austgen asked if the committee had reviewed all of the policies. Stick confirmed to Austgen that the committee not only reviewed them, but had spent six hours on this group of them for the Police Department alone. Chief Fisher reviewed all updates made and the policies by name as follows: Use of Force, Conducted Energy Device, Firearms, Canines (K9), Personal Recognizance Bond, First Amendment Assemblies, Vehicle Towing, Unmanned Aerial System, Personal Communication Devices, Anti-Retaliation, Outside Employment & Outside Overtime, Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments, and Discipline & Termination. Was noted to remove line from 502.9 regarding copy of inventory provided to the tow truck driver. Fisher stated he feels the review board has actually worked out very well, noting a lot of questions are able to be answered. Stick, noting the Town Attorney recommended forming the review sub-committee, felt more time could be spent outside of a public meeting to discuss matters. He stated he and Villalobos were part of the police policy review committee and he and Olthoff were part of the fire policy review committee. A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to approve all changes of the policies noted by title as presented by Chief Fisher. Roll call vote: Govert - Yes, Olthoff - Yes, Villalobos - Yes, Stick - Yes, Kaper - Yes. Vote: 5-0. Attorney Austgen inquired about if the body camera SOP had been included into procedures. Fisher confirmed the policy had been approved and sent to his office. Austgen indicated he had not seen it. Fisher directed Moore to resend it. Stick indicated the last couple months had a lot of policy changes.

Other: Chief Fisher stated they were looking into a new program that could be more beneficial to our community named Too Good For Drugs possibly replacing DARE. He stated the evidence-based program is similar in comparison and the up-side is that Geminus would pay us to teach the material to the school versus us attempting to obtain funding. Fisher indicated he has reached out to meet with Crown Point Community Schools. There is a MOU that would need to be signed in order to teach the class, but they are not ready for that yet. Fisher clarified for Stick that it was in the board's packet for review, but he would need to address concerns with Crown Point as they want to have consistency in the same program being taught within the school district.

FIRE DEPARTMENT: OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Communications: Chief Wilkening the dedication for Tim White Celebration was well attended, flag presented to the family and dedicated a truck to him with decal name on the truck.

Finances – Purchase Orders, Expenditure Reports & Grants: Chief Wilkening reviewed the purchase orders and expenditure reports noting the equipment for the ambulances including cots, auto-loaders, defibrillators, monitors all have to be serviced every year stating the costs have drastically increased. He stated they were offered a maintenance package for 3 years at the cost of \$21,000 to include service on all of the equipment – at \$7,000/year. Wilkening indicated the Clerk-Treasurer did not want to proceed with locking into a 3-year commitment. He stated they would pay \$7,000 this year for just the cots, with a price increase next year. He indicated the defibrillators and heart monitors need tested, calibrated and maintained yearly, which would be an additional \$7,000 a year. Wilkening confirmed to Villalobos that Stryker was the only manufacturer of the equipment, noting there were different technicians, but they all charge about the same. Wilkening reported all air packs were tested for their annual air flow testing at the cost of \$830. Wilkening reported completing the SAFER grant for 3 full-time employees. He had requested 6, but Town Manager Salatas felt 3 would be a better option considering the state of the

town. He stated they should hear results from the grant in September. Wilkening stated Officer Machalk assisted the department in writing the grant last year, thanked him for his assistance, and setting the foundation for this year, which he was able to submit himself. He indicated Deputy Chief Mager is working on a few equipment grants, of which one was received in the amount of \$5,000 from Trans Canadian Pipeline for a battery-operated ventilation fan to be used during fires, which would allow them to not have to push carbon monoxide from a gas-operated fan back into the building. Wilkening confirmed to Kaper that a letter would be written for the board to send their appreciation.

Staffing: Chief Wilkening stated they were short one person; one person in the PERF process who was part-time, but working in full-time capacity slot so that crew is not hurting for one person which has created some overtime; he stated they were waiting on the PERF process and creating some overtime. He stated there were some hiccups with the tests needing redone. He stated they have 3 new applications for volunteers and 2 for part-time, noting they will be reviewing applications, doing in-house interviews, then bringing them to the board for interviews. Wilkening stated he normally took care of the volunteers, but would route them through the board if they felt they needed to. He was surprised to see two of them are right out of high school, noting one of the high school EMT classes sponsored by St. Anthony's are doing all of the precepting at the Fire Department. They are able to get a first-hand look at what they are doing.

Training Report: Chief Wilkening reviewed the monthly report, noting quite a bit of it was done off-site in the past. Because of visual aids and the training room in the back, they are not only able to cut back on off-site training, but also host training for other departments. Wilkening noted hours of training for the EMT staff and often times needing to pay them during their off time due to training not always being available on their on days. He noted online training being utilized through Lexipol as well. Wilkening confirmed for Villalobos that the dive team is training twice a month and training with district members, along with hosting ice training on the lake throughout the winter and training other departments. He noted two members have been certified and three more are going to be sent. The goal is to have 15 certified divers, noting they are currently around 9, which are a mix of full-time, part-time and volunteer members. Wilkening reported they anticipate more problems with the lake this year due to obstacles from the dredging project being involved. Wilkening stated he would like to see the Marine Division to be its own separate division later on and possibly include the police again as well.

Equipment: Chief Wilkening reported the ladder truck at Fire Services for approximately a month with an outrigger issue. Modulators and connectors have been replaced twice, and upon returning the vehicle for use, the issue presented again. He reported the 3rd ambulance in need of a lot of repair, noting looking into the use of a used ambulance to get them through until another new ambulance can be obtained. He stated production time for a new ambulance was 24-36 months out. He stated there were a couple of used ambulances that have become available in the region which could be obtained and used to get them through those three years until a new one obtained. The 2nd ambulance out is a 2013 demo-ambulance and is starting to show its age, nickel-and-diming them. Wilkening confirmed to Villalobos that a new custom ambulance cost would be \$325,000. The newest ambulance is noted to be from 2021. Wilkening reported that they recently took a trip to Columbus, Ohio to do the final construction build for the firetruck. He noted they were there for a day and a half, toured the factory, finalized everything on the truck for production,

and looking at production time of 12 months, possibly 16 months with paperwork. He stated that the company they are using is reporting 24-36 months out on newly built trucks now and possibly not taking new orders in order to get caught up with production. Wilkening felt that talks of adding a new engine to the fleet would be recommended, acknowledging costs would be \$800,000 to \$1 million. He spoke with Town Manager Salatas, noting he was receptive to opportunities to get another ambulance and possibly another fire truck in the pipe and looking at a year to a year and a half after that to get another new one for replacement of the 30- and 26-year-old fire trucks. He reported being in the market for two new chiefs' trucks for himself and Deputy Chief Mager, noting one was in the Sustainability Plan for next year, but indicated he would be asking for two as they desperately need them.

Monthly Activity Report: Chief Wilkening reported 125 calls for the month, 75% in Cedar Lake, 18% in the township and 7% were mutual aid calls. Wilkening confirmed to Villalobos that 28 times during the month they had 2 incidents at the same time and 4 times during the month they had 4 incidents at the same time, noting staff of 4 people and supplementing them with volunteers. Villalobos asked how they handle 4 calls at the same time. Wilkening clarified that sometimes they do not and request mutual aid. He indicated most of the time those types of calls are ambulance calls, noting they average an hour and a half by the time they go to the call, pick up the patient and taken them to the hospital. He reminded the board that the new hospital that is being built is even further away and the turn around time would be near 2 hours for a call. He stated they do transport to Dyer and Methodist in Merrillville at times. He stated that with the community growth, protocols for the hospital taking longer, longer travel locations, there is a challenge to get enough help to cover the calls. Wilkening stated that he and Deputy Chief Mager, along with the Volunteer Chiefs, reschedule their lives on the off-time based on the availability for the community, but it has been a challenge especially with opening a new station and need for more personnel.

Lexipol Recommended Policy Update: Chief Wilkening reviewed the policies by name as follows: Fire Service Authority, Policy Manual, Organizational Structure, Interim Directives, Minimum Staffing Levels, Line-of-Duty Death & Serious Injury Investigations, use of Department-Owned & Personal Property, Personal Communication Devices, Recruitment & Selection, Promotions & Transfers, Educational Incentives, Emergency Recall, Overtime, Grievance Procedure, Workplace Violence, Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments, Military Leave, Anti-Retaliation and Sick Leave. Wilkening stated many of the policies were affected by the request of the Town Manager to remove the term "collective bargaining agreement" from the policies. He stated the Drug & Alcohol-Free Workplace policy was being reviewed by the Town Attorney. Wilkening mirrored Chief Fisher's statement regarding the board involvement in the review of the policies being refreshing and hands-on. He felt supportive and that it was working well. A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to approve all changes of the policies noted by title as presented and reviewed by Chief Wilkening. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0. Wilkening thanked Moore for her assistance to make the process easier.

Other: Chairman Stick noted an item came into view with the recommendation of the Town Attorney to recommend to the Town Council in reference to ProTeam Tactical Performance. Stick read the letter from Town Manager Salatas in its entirety noting specifically, "ProTeam Tactical

Performance would be used in lieu of Working Well going forward for any services they provide that are needed.” A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by David Villalobos, to amend the agenda for the purpose of personnel for police and fire department for the Town Council to approve ProTeam Tactical. Chief Wilkening noted this would not replace the PERF evaluations that needed to be done through Working Well, noting they are the only ones that do that. Chief Fisher noted they were certified PERF doctors. Attorney Austgen noted it would be evaluated. Fisher indicated it was a state requirement. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0. A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to send Favorable Recommendation to the Town Council to approve ProTeam Tactical. Roll call vote: Govert – Yes, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Stick – Yes, Kaper – Yes. Vote: 5-0.

OTHER

Legal Report from Town Attorney: Attorney Austgen reported working on the MOU and should have update on progress this week. He reported Training Reimbursement Agreement is being finalized and would be provided to Chief Wilkening. Austgen reported the Fee Schedule Ordinance as been resolved through adoption through the mandatory replacement ordinance update. He reported collection of nearly \$12,000 in fees from training reimbursement fees from the police and fire department. Austgen confirmed to Kaper the funds should go back into the general fund. Wilkening discussed the possibility of an amendment in the event an individual wants to return to work as a part-time or volunteer, not being charged for gear again and not being in agreement with that part of the contract. Austgen noted that is the business side of it. Olthoff agreed with Wilkening, if the individual used his previous gear. Multiple discussions ensued.

New Building Update: Chief Fisher reported the ground-breaking ceremony for the new building will be held on April 14. He indicated he and Chief Wilkening will be going to Indianapolis to look at some furniture display rooms. Fisher confirmed to Kaper the ground-breaking ceremony would be held at 5 pm and noted formal invitations were sent out to the board from the Town Manager’s Administrative Assistant.

Emergency Operations Plan: Chief Fisher reported the plan is completed and Moore requested one final review from the board before being sent to the Town Attorney and Town Council for approval. Chief Wilkening noted Moore facilitated the project and made it very easy to make decisions on. He indicated the plan would not be released to the public, as it would be an internal documentation used for disasters. Fisher clarified for Villalobos that departments would be trained on the plan’s contents, just not released to the public due to sensitivity.

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

ADJOURNMENT: Stick called the meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm, after a motion from Kaper, seconded by Villalobos, and all in favor voice vote, noting they would resume in Exec Session upon completion of the public meeting.

TOWN OF CEDAR LAKE BOARD OF SAFETY

Norman Stick, Chairman

Lester Kaper, Vice-Chairman

Joshua Govert, Member

James Olthoff, Member

David Villalobos, Member

ATTEST:

Sarah Moore, Recording Secretary