



Town of Cedar Lake Board of Safety Public Meeting Minutes Wednesday, April 26, 2023 at 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: Norm Stick called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Norm Stick asked for a moment of silence for the passing of Chief Fisher's father.

ROLL CALL:

Absent	Joshua Govert, Member	Absent	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
		Absent*	Nick Recupito, Town Council Liaison
		Present	David Austgen, Town Attorney

**Late arrival*

PUBLIC COMMENT: Stick called for Public Comment. Diane Korach (14630 Euclid Street, Unit D), stating she has been a resident of Cedar Lake for about 10 years, reported on March 30, 2023 at approximately 9 pm, she had been in bed and heard jiggling at her front door. Korach said she lives alone, was scared, and came downstairs and observed through the glass men's legs at the door that were not her sons. Korach said she shouted "who's that," the man mumbled something, then left. She noted the man had opened her storm door and was trying to get into the door of her home. Korach stated she then called 911 around 9:05, and said they would send someone out. She called her son, but he said he was unable to come over that time. She stated her son called back 10 minutes later, police had not arrived, and he suggested that she call 911 back. Korach called 911 back, received the same dispatcher, said she told the dispatcher she thought police were being sent and the dispatcher said she would send someone around. Korach called her son back and said he would stay on the phone with her until someone arrived. She noted 10 or 12 minutes passed and no one came. Her son told her to hang up and he would call from his residence in Beecher. Her son called 911, connecting through Will County, explained the situation, connecting him into Lake County, then transferred to Southcom 911, noting the dispatcher was familiar with the situation. Korach stated that 28 minutes later Officer Matson arrived, noting he had no sense of urgency and called him "aloof." She described to Matson a tall, black man, uncertain of age or identity. She stated that neighbors started sending her pictures that she was going to share with Matson and he stated to just email them to him. She commented she would email them, but did he not want to see them. Korach's daughter arrived and emailed the photos to Matson at 1030, noting she did not receive a response. Korach stated she called Chief Fisher the next day on March 31, leaving a message, and asking that he call her back to find out why there was a breakdown in taking 28 minutes. She stated he did not call back. On April 1, she called Josh Govert, whom she received his number from someone at work. She explained the situation to him, noting his response was stated as unacceptable and he would find out where the disconnect was and return her call. She stated he did not call back. On April 5, she stated calling Chief Fisher again, spoke with him explaining the situation, noting she was very upset and not irate in her demeanor. She said Fisher told her they were busy that night with 4 or 5 domestics. She said she understood they were busy,

but someone was trying to “break into her house.” She stated he would look into it and call her back, claiming he did not return the call. She expressed her frustration that not only the situation happened, but how long it took for response and no one calling her back or responding. She stated she then called the Town Manager and spoke to the Administrative Assistant who was new and was transferred to Michelle. The woman she spoke to told her she was sorry for what happened to Korach and someone would get back to her later that day or the next, noting that was on April 18 and today (April 26) she still has not heard back from anyone. She stated “it’s incomprehensible to think that three 911 calls in 48 minutes is the norm,” noting she “could have been robbed, beaten, chopped up in little pieces and buried in my backyard.” Chairman Stick asked Korach to provide her name and phone number and he would get back to her. Korach stated when she spoke with Fisher, he noted that 911 was routed through a different agency than his department, and she noted it was listed in the log as a “suspicious person”, stating a “suspicious person isn’t trying to break into your house.” She claimed that there was only one call recorded, not the other two, on the log. Stick stated he would look into it to see how to fix it. Korach repeated Matson did not want to look at the photos and wanted them emailed. Korach provided Stick with contact information and copies of the photos she had printed. Stick stated he would personally call her when he had the facts obtained. Villalobos took the paperwork from her, stated he was sorry this happened to her and someone would call her.

Stick called for Public Comment three times; none received.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for Wednesday, March 22, 2023 Public Meeting: A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to approve the meeting minutes. Roll call vote: Govert – Absent, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Kaper – Yes, Stick – Yes. Vote: 4-0.

VIPS REPORT: Lieutenant Layer reviewed the report noting everyone met their hours plus some. Layer reported 5 hall outs including 4 for crossing guard duty and 1 utility problem. Layer confirmed to Olthoff that no additional applicants have been received. Olthoff and Stick thanked Layer for the work done.

POLICE DEPARTMENT:

Communications: Deputy Chief Brittingham read the email communication received from Mr. Wright thanking all of the officers in the schools for the work they do. Brittingham read the social media post from Denny Wilkening acknowledging Officer Powell for re-erecting a crucifix that had fallen over at Holy Name during a storm. Brittingham read the letter from St John Police Department Sergeant Lukasik thanking Corporal Allande and Officer Lewis in their assistance with a SJPD case involving Target.

Finances – Purchase Orders, Expenditure Reports & Grants: Deputy Chief Brittingham reviewed the purchase order and expenditure reports noting quite a few vehicle repairs to vehicles. He noted that K9 Non-Reverting Fund Ordinance will be adopted at Town Council meeting on Thursday. He reported the money received from Crown Point Community Foundation and Cedar Lake Summerfest Committee to be used to purchase shields has been ordered.

Deputy Chief Brittingham reported that Law Enforcement Partners, who does the magnetic calendars, had been approved two years ago for the proceeds to be distributed to the DARE fund.

Moore explained that since there are anticipated changes with the DARE program moving forward and the Board previously approved the money from the proceeds of the calendar be directed to DARE, that it was being requested that the money this year go to the K9 non-reverting fund instead, once that fund is approved by the Town Council. A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to approve the proceeds from Law Enforcement Partners be changed from DARE to the K9 non-reverting fund. Roll call vote: Govert – Absent, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Kaper – Yes, Stick – Yes. Vote: 4-0.

Staffing: Deputy Chief Brittingham reported the Department Inspections/Meeting will occur May 31, 2023 including a department inspection and meeting at 8 am, department photo at 9 am and EAP orientation at 10 am. He stated that newly hired officer Nicholas Enyeart will be officially sworn in at the April 27, 2023 Town Council meeting and was present at tonight's meeting. He noted he starts FTO Friday and received his uniform.

Training Report: Deputy Chief Brittingham reviewed the training report, noting that K9 Training with Johnny and Officer Tomko began and is going well. Software was purchased to track his training and for GPS tracking. Brittingham reviewed each item within the training report.

Equipment: Deputy Chief Brittingham reported Council approved purchasing vehicles, they have been ordered but there is no projected date for receiving.

Monthly Activity Report: Deputy Chief Brittingham reviewed the monthly activity reports with the Board including: Calls for Service: Agency assistance 139, citizen arrests 155, juveniles 7, ordinances 135, persons 47, property 13, and traffic 738 for a total of 1234 for the month and 3798 for the year. Citations: 149 state violations, 1 town traffic violation, 52 town ordinance violations, 5 other for a total of 207 for March and 602 for the year. Warnings: 669 state violations, 3 town traffic violations, 56 town ordinance violations, 3 other for a total of 731 for March and 2179 for the year. Arrests: 27 total arrests, 48 charges filed, 30 misdemeanor, 10 felony, 8 warrants for a total of 85 arrests and 145 total charges filed for the year. In reviewing the increase in traffic stops, Villalobos reviewed figures and inquired why the steep jump. Brittingham noted increase in productivity with the 12-hour shifts and confirmed to Olthoff that they do not work off of a quota.

Lexipol Recommended Policy Update: Moore indicated there were no Lexipol policies to update at the time. The only thing of note was that the EAP, which had been worked on as part of the Wellness Policy, had been approved by the Town Council. Moore confirmed to Stick that Sergeant Miller was selected anonymously by department vote to be the Peer Support representative and completed Peer Support training last week.

Other: Deputy Chief Brittingham reported the Too Good For Drugs is on hold until after discussions with Hanover School corporation curriculum staff. He reported that Crown Point is not on board with the change.

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

Communications: Chief Wilkening read the letter from IT Director Wroe recognizing Deputy Chief Mager for his work on Mutual Aid Response Plan. Wilkening added Mager is called upon

by other communities to assist their departments with similar plans. He said it takes certain skills and detail orientation which Mager excels at.

Finances – Purchase Orders, Expenditure Reports & Grants: Chief Wilkening reviewed the purchase orders and expenditure reports noting uniforms for new staff and cot apparatus that pulls in/out of the ambulance being recertified. Wilkening noted issued with the ladder trucking requiring a one-month timeframe at Fire Services for diagnostic repairs, upon the completion noting they should take it elsewhere. The truck was taken to Legacy in Chicago, had it for a week, had a few small issues, completed the repairs and it is now back in service. He clarified to Villalobos that the final amount of the repairs would be included in next month's report. Villalobos inquired on unit 1253 repairs. Wilkening stated it needed a lot of work and since they were not slated for any new vehicles in the plan, it had to be fixed, which was completed by Nagy's. Wilkening stated one vehicle is in the plan for next year, but he is requesting two – one for Mager and one for himself. Wilkening stated they did submit their application for the SAFER grant for three full-time personnel, per the advisement of Town Manager Salatas, in March, but they would not have an answer until approximately September.

Staffing: Stick had the applicants introduce themselves: Andrew Briggs, Jena Reynhout, Preston Kalil and Bailey Bachand. Chief Wilkening reported Zachary Fliszar-Tatgenhorst pulled his application. Stick reported Dylan Vick's name would be removed from the applicant list as well. Stick read a letter from Assistant Chief Dean Wilkening, stating retirement from Chief's rank of the Cedar Lake Fire Department and remain on as a firefighter. Stick read a letter from Anthony DeAdam resigning.

A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to accept the retirement of Dean Wilkening as Chief but staying on the department as a firefighter and resignation of Anthony DeAdam. Roll call vote: Govert – Absent, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Kaper – Yes, Stick – Yes. Vote: 4-0.

A motion was made by Charlie Kaper, seconded by David Villalobos, to accept hiring volunteer firefighters Jena Reynhout, Preston Kalil, and Bailey Bachand. Roll call vote: Govert – Absent, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Kaper – Yes, Stick – Yes. Vote: 4-0.

A motion was made by David Villalobos, seconded by Jim Olthoff, to accept hiring part-time EMT/firefighter Andrew Briggs. Roll call vote: Govert – Absent, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Kaper – Yes, Stick – Yes. Vote: 4-0.

Stick stated they would like to authorize Chief Wilkening to advertise for an emergency hire of a full-time firefighter/paramedic or firefighter/EMT. Wilkening noted that Michael Cummins was resigning. Discussions ensued on the letter from DeAdam or Cummins not being available in the packet; Wilkening stated he would provide it to the Board tomorrow. Town Attorney Austgen clarified to Kaper that letters of resignation, despite coming email, should be signed. Discussions took place on making an amendment to the agenda to accept the letter of resignation of Cummins and advertising for the emergency full-time hire.

A motion was made to amend the agenda by David Villalobos, seconded by Charlie Kaper. Roll call vote: Govert – Absent, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Kaper – Yes, Stick – Yes. Vote: 4-0.

A motion was made by David Villalobos, seconded by Charlie Kaper, to accept the resignation of firefighter Michael Cummins and authorize the advertising for the emergency hire of the fire department. Roll call vote: Govert – Absent, Olthoff – Yes, Villalobos – Yes, Kaper – Yes, Stick – Yes. Vote: 4-0. Chief Wilkening stated they would post the advertisement for 2 weeks for an emergency hire. He stated they do still have a hiring list with two people on it, noting they were both EMTs. If a paramedic does not apply, they would bring forward the EMTs as the next hire for interview.

Training Report: Chief Wilkening reviewed the monthly report, clarifying for Kaper that training occurs every day. Wilkening clarified for Villalobos those numerous hours of driving training is obtained along with operating the vehicle and equipment. Wilkening reported that one of the newer members of the department that had just been cleared but did cause some damage to the ambulance recently. He reported an incident at Tastee Top recently as well, causing damage that will take the ambulance out of service for repairs for approximately two weeks. Wilkening reported the backup ambulance as a “piece of junk,” which Stick replied requesting a repair list never indicated it. Stick stated no one had told Wilkening to stop. Wilkening stated it is not worth investing a lot of money into an ambulance that is not worth it. Stick stated a professional report is not his opinion. Wilkening apologized for calling the equipment “junk” and noted it is in bad shape. Stick stated it was his opinion. Wilkening confirmed it was his opinion based on experience. Stick stated a meeting was coming up to discuss the ambulance. Wilkening stated he had not heard about it, it was not communicated to him, so he assumed nothing was being done.

Equipment: Chief Wilkening reported Fred Sinew handling yearly maintenance of small unit equipment in house.

Monthly Activity Report: Chief Wilkening reviewed the report with the Board including 123 EMS and 27 fire calls for a total of 158 calls for March, noting 117 calls were in the town, 29 unincorporated Hanover Township and 12 mutual aid calls. He stated reports have been shared with the Township Trustee per his request of monthly reports.

Lexipol Recommended Policy Update: Chief Wilkening reported no current Lexipol policies to update tonight. He stated they would be preparing a policy for next month regarding retirement and senior active-member status that did not include in the new policy inclusion.

OTHER

Legal Report from Town Attorney: Attorney Austgen reported he is working on the Reconstruction Team MOU. He reported needing more information for the Training Reimbursement Agreement rewording/update for the Fire Department. He reported not certain what the Training Reimbursement Agreement for Police Department Holzhauer was. Austgen stated needing to meet to review with Chief Fisher on the Conditional Offer of Employment Change. He reported having dialogue with the Town Manager and having the Special Event Permit in draft form, noting it should be ready soon. Austgen stated he spoke with Stick regarding putting

the Lexipol Policies on the agenda (specifically Mobile Audio/Video and Body Worn Camera, Use of Force, and Vehicle Pursuits) noting needing discussion with the Police Chief.

Town Council Liaison(s) Report: Miller and Recupito stated that neither of them had anything to report at this time.

New Building Update: Stick reported several of the members and departments attended the ground breaking ceremony.

Emergency Operations Plan: Town Attorney Austgen stated he has received a draft of the plan for his review.

Other: Kaper inquired in reference to the Training Reimbursement Agreement if mandatory exit interviews could be included. Wilkening indicated he did not think it could be mandatory and that people do not want to do it. Austgen stated to hold their last check. Brittingham asked if that was considered legal, to which Austgen replied “absolutely.” Wilkening stated he did not feel it was right and has asked his staff in the past and they have said no. Kaper and Villalobos felt it was important to have and helpful to them.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Stick called for Public Comment. Councilman Miller stated he had a good friend that had passed away after having a heart attack last week. His wife came home, he had been working on the deck, she called 911 and they had her start doing CPR with her husband. She said within minutes, quite a few of members of the police and fire departments arrived. Miller stated that one of the policemen helped her went to her car, brought in all of the groceries, put the ones in the freezer and fridge and helped her. She conveyed her appreciation to Miller for the police and fire departments in her time of need.

Stick called for Public Comment three times; none received.

ADJOURNMENT: Stick called the meeting adjourned at 7:04 pm, after a motion from Villalobos, seconded by Kaper, and all in favor voice vote.

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