



**Village Board Fire Public Safety Committee  
~ Regular Meeting ~  
MINUTES**

**~ Thursday, March 10, 2022 ~**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Gunter called the blended meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Mayor Gunter, Clerk Szymski, Trustee Barker, Trustee Brady, Trustee Guzzo, Trustee Liddle, Trustee Nero, Village Manager May, Fire Chief Riley, D/C Connolly, D/C O'Hare and Finance Director Parker.

**ALSO PRESENT**

Police Chief Gunther, Human Resources Manager Brainerd, Communications Director McIntyre, FPB Director Berkowitz, Chairman Kovanda and Administrative Assistant Saldivar.

**ABSENT**

Trustee Simonovich

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all in attendance.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment was received.

**APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 21, 2021 PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Trustee Liddle made a motion, seconded by Trustee Barker to approve the October 21, 2021 Public Safety Committee Minutes as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

**SERVICE AWARDS**

Fire Chief Riley presented three 20-year service award plaques. The recipients were Lt. Chris Stoltman, Captain Richard Zasada, and Deputy Chief Kevin O'Hare. Lt. Stoltman arrived later in the afternoon to receive his plaque due to being on a call. Brian Eder was presented a 40-year plaque for his service with the EMA.

**FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Battalion Chief Kielczynski presented Captain Joe Newton with the 2021 Firefighter of the Year Award plaque.

## **PROMOTIONS**

Fire Chief Riley announced the promotion of Firefighter Zach Crawford and Firefighter Ted Kazeos to Lieutenant. They were sworn in by Mayor Gunter and received their new badges and collar pins and they were pinned by family members.

## **YEAR END REPORT**

The year report was presented by Deputy Chief O'Hare. He started by saying that 2021 was a challenging year for the Westmont Fire Department, like the whole world, but despite that, they found some successes and tried to move forward.

### **Highlights**

- The mission statement was revised and they also developed a vision statement that serves as a guide to recruiting and retaining new employees, focusing on what is important to their employees, followed up by 16 Life Saving Initiatives.
- There were 8 promotions in 2021, which include 1 Battalion Chief, 3 Captains, and 4 Lieutenants.
- Members achieved 33 new certifications and went to 11 different conferences.
- The candidate program is back after being dormant for a number of years. Currently, there are 5 candidates that are attending the College of DuPage Fire Academy. After that they will attend EMT school. Once properly certified, they will be hired by the fire department.
- In 2021, the Westmont Fire Department ran the most amount of calls in its history which totaled 4,685 and the number of calls continues to grow.
- Westmont lost \$490,000 in personal property. However, the Westmont Fire Department saved \$16 million in personal property.
- The WFD generated revenue and were awarded grants totaling \$2.1 million in 2021. The revenue was from fire recovery, GEMT, and ambulance billing. They also received grants for COVID, SCBA, and for the 1888 command van.
- The WFD traveled all around the area, the state, and the country to help others.

### **Challenges**

COVID-19 cost the fire department an additional \$46,414, some of which was recouped through grants. There were also 125 missed shifts due to COVID-19, which sometimes caused the fire department to shut down a vehicle.

### **Solutions**

Deputy Chief O'Hare said that they implemented a more aggressive marketing strategy to recruit more members to the fire department. They also teamed up with a marketing specialist and created flyers where people can view them online and it takes them straight to the village website.

## **FIT TESTER**

Fire Chief Riley said this next item was not on the agenda. The WFD fit tests their members, Public Works, and the Police Department. The fit tester currently on hand is 11 years old and has come to end of life use. The fire department is requesting a new machine that costs \$18,000, and that offers measurable ways to see the protection it provides. It includes new software on a tablet which is easier to transfer, among other things, and it is also the same brand that Illinois OSHA uses. The WFD has \$10,000 in the budget but needs an additional \$8,000. The new machine is specific to what they need and it cannot be bid out.

### **PART-TIME SYSTEM PAY INCREASE**

Deputy Chief O'Hare would like a more attractive starting pay for the part-time fire operation personnel. He is asking that the paramedic incentive be increased from \$2.28 per hour to \$2.75 per hour. He is also asking that the 3 levels of firefighter wages all be increased with a 10% buffer in between them. He would like the first level to be raised to \$20.76 to be competitive with the other fire departments and in the working world in general. Chief Riley mentioned that the Westmont Fire Department has always been a model that their neighbors have followed and that he would like to make that more attractive.

Deputy Chief O'Hare is requesting an annual \$5,000 stipend for all fire department employees as a recruitment and retention tool. This stipend would go towards health insurance, formal education, professional development, or even a college education. This stipend can also be used for training, fire service school, and paramedic school. At this time, the WFD does not pay for paramedic school. The fire department needs this stipend to entice people to join their team. The total expense would be \$375,000 annually.

### **CONTRACT PAY INCREASE**

Chief Riley said that there is a shortage in paramedics so the wages for the contract medics also need to be raised. The WFD wages were in the top 3 in salaries, and now, they are in the bottom 3. There are 11 contract members right now. For 12 paramedics, the increase in salary would total \$293,000. Chief Riley would like a 5-year contract.

### **GEMT RATE INCREASES PROPOSAL/GEMT UPDATE**

Chief Riley said there are about 300 Medicaid patients in the village. The village has brought in \$793,000 from Medicaid patients. Just in January, the fire department had 487 calls and brought in \$116,803. Every year the GEMT rate increases. As of March of 2020, the rate is \$2,300 and may increase to \$2,672.20. Fire Chief Riley asked the board if they would like to raise their rates. Currently, whatever the insurance doesn't pay, the fire department writes it off. Fire Chief Riley also asked if they should automatically raise the rate each year or ask the Village Board each year. The rate can go lower or even go away. All agreed to change the rate as the GEMT rate changes.

### **2021 EDITION - IBC UPDATE**

Director of the FPB, Neil Berkowitz is going forward with the 2021 edition of the IBC codes along with Community Development. The relationship between both departments is working very well. The FPB and CD were working with the 2012 fire and building codes but both are now updating to 2021 which not many communities have done. Director Berkowitz will make a summary of the major changes along with Community Development. Finally, Fire Chief Riley asked the FPB to start inspecting buildings downtown twice a year, which is the entire B1 section.

### **STAFFING UPDATE**

Fire Chief Riley said that they have already discussed this topic fully earlier in the meeting so he went on to discuss the following updates.

### **ACDC DISPATCH UPDATE**

Chief Riley said that ACDC has had a 150% turnover in their fire dispatch center. The

Director was let go and the Assistant Director has left, among many others. However, the fire department and police department are still very happy with the service from ACDC.

### **NORCOMM FIRE ALARM UPDATE**

Fire Chief Riley said that there was a \$5.00 increase in fire alarms in January. There was some pushback from some business people and landlords, but that has now calmed down. The contract is up in 2024 so they will be looking at it again in late 2023. Currently, there are 900 businesses that have fire alarms. Not all businesses have been paying their bills at this time.

### **NEW FIRE ENGINE / NEW AMBULANCE / NEW COMMUNICATIONS VAN 1888/ NEW TOWER LADDER UPDATE**

Fire Chief Riley said that the new engine was supposed to arrive on 1/27/22 and is now supposed to arrive on 3/23/22. Pierce is paying the fire department a late fee of \$53 a day for each day that it is late. The new ambulance was supposed to be delivered in July, then September and now October.

The lease for the ladder truck is up in April of 2023. The build time is 22 months for a new ladder truck. The cost is \$1.695 million and was promised in 10-11 months. The basket is in the back instead of the front and it's a foot lower. Therefore, there will be less damage. Fire Chief Riley asked for a 10 year lease instead of a 7 year lease. The price will go up if the ladder is ordered after May 1st. The new ladder will be 100 feet instead of the old one which is 105 feet long.

Deputy Chief Connolly said that they are on track to getting the new command van in May. Construction started in January. The command van was purchased from LDV in Burlington, Wisconsin. The cost is \$677,000 plus \$72,000 additional for radios and other equipment. Deputy Chief Connolly applied for a \$49,000 AFG grant. Also, they have a FEMA port security grant for \$451,000 and MABAS Div. 10 will pay \$150,000 and the police department and village will pay \$150,000.

### **COMMUNICATIONS VAN 1888 SURPLUS**

Fire Chief Riley said that the fire department would like to surplus existing Communications Van 1888. However, there have not been any reasonable offers yet.

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Trustee Guzzo said the fire department and the village as a whole have come a long way from where they were and where they are now. She thanked everyone for all of their hard work.

There being no other business to discuss, Trustee Brady motioned to adjourn, to which Trustee Liddle seconded. The meeting subsequently adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jackie Saldivar  
Recording Secretary