

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

~ Thursday, August 27, 2020 ~

CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Guzzo called the virtual meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Gunter, Clerk Szymiski, Trustee Barker, Trustee Guzzo, Trustee Liddle, Trustee Nero, Village Manager May, Fire Chief Riley, Finance Director Parker.

ALSO PRESENT

Deputy Fire Chief O'Hare, Deputy Fire Chief Connolly, Deputy Fire Chief Fitzgerald, EMS Director Dralle, Deputy Police Chief Gruen, Deputy Police Chief Thompson, Human Resources Director Brainard, Communications Director McIntyre, Admin. Asst. Mielcarski, Community Development Director Sylvester.

ABSENT

Trustee Barry

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was waived due to the virtual meeting format.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Public Comment was received.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 27, 2020 AND MAY 26, 2020 PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES

Trustee Liddle made a motion, seconded by Trustee Nero to approve the February 27, 2020 and May 26, 2020, Public Safety Committee Minutes as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES RELATED TO POLICE REFORM

Police Chief Gunther advised there is a national movement to reform certain law enforcement aspects in response to civil unrest and police use of force issues. There have been several protest and riot incidents around the country. More recently an Antioch resident shot and killed two people in Kenosha and is currently detained in the Lake County jail. He said Deputy Police Chief Gruen is the Region 4 North Task Force Commander, Officer Longini along with several other Lake County Sheriff's Office employees are members of the team. They would be staffing protests and riots. He said he wanted Public Safety Committee members to be aware as it places Westmont Police Department members potentially in harm's way on State and National level situations.

Police Chief Gunther said a DuPage Chief's Meeting was held earlier in the day with all agencies present. There is a large State legislation push in the area of police reform. A State level de-certification board is being proposed. The board would take an allegation of misconduct and adjudicate it in a manner in which a police officer could retain or lose their certifications through the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board. It is still in preliminary discussion but is foremost in proposed police reform measures. If done correctly, it could be a good idea but a downside is it adds a third component of investigation after an individual department and State's Attorney Office investigations.

Police Chief Gunther said there is also a push on a local, state and national level to develop a uniform use of force policy. The guidelines for how police officers engage with the public would be mandated by a uniform use of force policy. A standardized policy is not currently in place, each individual department enforces a department specific policy. Although policies are similar in nature there seems to be more of a difference in items omitted from each policy.

Police Chief Gunther further advised there is discussion on modifying qualified immunity. He indicated it was hard to explain but any decrease in qualified immunity to police officers increases local municipality liability. The DuPage Police Chiefs and Illinois Police Chiefs are opposed to any modifications. Discussion is also being held on bail reform which would essentially release detainees much quicker with lower cash bonds prior to going to trial.

Police Chief Gunther also said a state law requiring mandatory accreditation on some level is also being proposed. The Westmont Police Department was recently accredited and received a \$2,200 IRMA grant for participating in the accreditation process. Mayor Gunter asked if the State would mandate the accreditation agencies. Chief Gunther replied he was unsure but felt they would use CALEA or the State agency. The Westmont Police Department was accredited through CALEA.

BODY WORN CAMERAS AND LICENSE PLATE RECOGNITION

Police Chief Gunther advised there is a state and national level push to require body worn cameras by all police officers. The Westmont Police Department has been researching body camera use in an effort to get ahead of the curve. He further said from a legislative standpoint, language needs to be cleaned up relating to FOIA requests and redactions pertaining to body worn cameras. Departments would need to address aspects such as FOIA's, equipment cost, storage and infrastructure. Initial costs may be substantial but society appears to be demanding use and it would be in Westmont's best interest.

Mayor Gunter asked if any other departments currently utilize body worn cameras. Chief Gunther said Roselle and West Chicago Police Departments currently utilize body worn cameras. Chief Herron, Roselle Police Department, provided a four hour demonstration on the pros and cons of Axon body worn camera system. Staff would like to purchase the integrated in car and body worn systems so they are working off of the same system and platform. It is a very costly expenditure and staff is also looking into utilizing IRMA grant funds to reduce potential purchases.

Police Chief Gunther said the license plate recognition camera system had been discussed but put on hold due to COVID. Staff would now like to move forward with installation at the Ogden Avenue near Blackhawk Drive as well as 63rd Street and Cass Avenue. The cameras would take pictures of all vehicles flagging license plates with potential criminal activity. Police Chief Gunther spoke at length with Hinsdale Police Chief Brian King regarding Hinsdale's use of LPR cameras. The program has been successful and the Village is considering additional locations. If the same systems are used, Westmont would have the ability to tap into Oak Brook, Hinsdale and Burr Ridge cameras.

POLICE STAFFING UPDATE

Police Chief Gunther said Police Officer Scott Teeter retired last week after 25 years of service. A small gathering was held to wish him well in his retirement. He further advised there is one officer on light duty due to an on duty injury and Officer Arndt is scheduled for a one year National Guard deployment to Texas in October.

Due to a reduction in staffing, approval was given to hire five probationary members from the eligibility list to bring staffing to 41 sworn officers. The Fire and Police Commission provided three background packets and will conduct three additional interviews on September 5th. Upon completion, the one year old eligibility list will be exhausted. Police Chief Gunther said the Fire and Police Commission would once again conduct a testing process to establish a new eligibility list.

Police Chief Gunther also indicated the Sergeant promotional list will be expiring in January 2021. The Police and Fire Commission is in the process of establishing a new Sergeant promotional list.

ENFORCEMENT OF GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Police Chief Gunther said there has been an increase in complaints regarding COVID compliance. Complaints are being received from both customers and business owners. The IDPH, DuPage County Sheriff's Office and local municipalities have jurisdiction over enforcement of COVID guidelines. The IDPH would like the local municipality to take the lead on enforcement so staff is working through the issues. He indicated the Police Department is addressing any complaints and keeping a record to stay on top of issues.

OTHER

Police Chief Gunther said the Police Department will be hosting a socially distant paper shred event on Saturday, October 17th beginning at 9:00 a.m. The event is held as part of the Illinois Special Olympics fundraisers.

Police Chief Gunther advised The National Night Out event has been officially cancelled due to COVID.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

GEMT REIMBURSEMENT

Fire Chief Riley said the Illinois Fire Chiefs Association worked for several years to develop a reimbursement process for EMS transport of Medicaid patients. Without GEMT, the Village was reimbursed approximately \$250 and wrote off the remainder of the transport bills on approximately 400 Medicaid patients per year. GEMT reimbursement is designed to make up approximately 50% of the difference.

Fire Chief Riley said last year, the Fire Department and Finance Department worked together to submit a cost sheet which needs to be annually resubmitted. This resulted in GEMT reimbursements being received this Spring. Over the last three months, the GEMT reimbursement has averaged approximately \$20,000 per month. Half of the reimbursement amount is required to be sent to the State.

The Illinois Fire Chiefs Association indicates that they expect the GEMT reimbursements to continue to increase as providers get their systems set up. With the new EMS billing rates and if Medicaid calls remain at historical levels, GEMT reimbursement could be 2-3 times what we are seeing thus far.

STORM RESPONSE AND PERFORMANCE SYSTEMS

Fire Chief Riley stated on Monday, August 10th, a significant storm affected a large portion of DuPage County and surrounding areas. An EF-1 tornado struck Lombard and communities to the east at approximately 3:30 p.m. High winds and rain occurred in most other communities. The most significant damage in our response area was in Liberty Park and Golfview Hills with numerous trees and power lines down.

This storm was a good test of all of the new county-wide systems (911 phone, CAD, Fire Station Alerting, Starcom Radio and others). ETSB and the PSAPs are reviewing the data and their experiences. We expect a report to be completed in the next few weeks. Preliminary data indicates that all systems remained operational during the entire storm event while experiencing an unusually high volume of calls. Westmont's Battalion Chief could see all of our pending calls with their priority. He then assigned units to respond based on location and priority. Radio systems were busy, but remained functional. There are several operational issues that will be reviewed by the PSAPs and the agencies.

COVID-19 CALL VOLUME

Fire Chief Riley said overall Fire Department call volume for the last month is up approximately 12% over the same time last year. EMS transports of potential COVID-19 cases from the three LTC nursing facilities total approximately 10% of the calls during the same period. Personnel are wearing full PPE on any suspected COVID-19 call and all calls to our LTC nursing facilities. PPE inventory has been increased to ensure sufficient PPE stock is available should a spike in cases occur this Fall.

ETSB RADIO REPLACEMENT

Deputy Chief Connolly advised the ETSB is currently conducting a survey of all police and fire agencies related to the potential replacement of the Starcom radios that ETSB provided approximately 10 years ago. Motorola will be discontinuing support for these radios over the next two years and the police agencies are considering encryption to provide greater security for their operations. Radio replacement is the single largest ETSB expense and will likely exceed \$20 million. Depending on the replacement policy that is adopted, the Village would likely need to replace 5-16 Village owned Starcom radios at approximately \$30,000 - \$130,000.

FIRE STATION ALERTING INSTALL COMPLETION

Deputy Chief Connolly advised supplemental fire station alerting equipment beyond what ETSB provided last year was ordered. The supplemental equipment provides visual indicators as well as alerting for areas within the fire stations that were not covered by the existing systems. It also allowed us to start replacing some 30 year old devices. All of the equipment is now installed and operating.

PROMOTIONAL TESTING

Fire Chief Riley advised there are five members testing for Captain rank and two members testing for Battalion Chief rank. Both promotional lists are currently expired. Both written and tactical components are being developed in-house with a projected savings of \$10,000.

STAFFING

Fire Chief Riley stated since January 1, 2020, a total of 16 members have been lost due to retirement or other full-time jobs that no longer allow secondary employment. There are currently six members on a leave of absence and more than likely only one of those members will be able to return to work for us.

He further said the department is currently short three Captains and four Lieutenants, which is why promotional testing is being conducted. Promotions may be presented before the next Safety Committee in November.

9-11 SERVICE UPDATE

Fire Chief Riley advised the Westmont Fire Department and Police Department will have a small staff only gathering outside at the flagpole at 500 North Cass on September 11th at 9:00 a.m. A remembrance for those first responders and others that paid the ultimate sacrifice on 9/11.

NEW FIRE DEPARTMENT RESIDENT SURVEY

Fire Chief Riley said staff is working on developing a resident survey that can be mailed in or done electronically to provide feedback regarding quality of service. This not only helps provide better service to residents but assists in achieving Accreditation benchmarks.

SCBA GRANT AWARDED

Fire Chief Riley said he was happy to report that yet again the Westmont Fire Department received a grant for \$181,818.18. This was the 6th largest grant amount awarded in Illinois. The grant money will be used to purchase new Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). Currently the SCBA committee is reviewing different vendors and will be making a recommendation within the next couple of weeks. A lot of hard work went into the grant process from Fire Department staff along with help from Finance Director Parker and Deputy Fire Chief Fitzgerald.

COVID-19 GRANT AWARDED

Fire Chief Riley stated the Westmont Fire Department received the highest awarded grant funding for Covid, getting \$38,205. He indicated he is very proud of staff for all of their hard work, especially Deputy Chief Jim Fitzgerald who did a majority of this grant process.

OTHER

Fire Chief Riley advised approximately 10 Westmont FD members and up to eight neighboring department members to be attending a Westmont in-house FAE class. This is a 40-hour state certified class that covers the technical aspects and skills sets to pump a fire engine. Outside cost would have been \$450 per student. This gives a projected \$2,000 savings with potential to offset additional costs by charging outside agency students to attend.

There being no other business to discuss, Trustee Liddle motioned to adjourn, to which Trustee Nero seconded. The meeting subsequently adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Hardy
Recording Secretary