



VILLAGE BOARD
31 West Quincy Street, Westmont, Illinois 60559
Tel: 630-981-6200
westmont.illinois.gov | villageboard@westmont.il.gov



POLICE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Westmont Village Hall - 31 West Quincy Street

Meeting Minutes - May 5, 2022

[Draft to be Approved - July 28, 2022](#)

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - Trustee Guzzo called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm
- II. **ROLL CALL**

<u>Committee</u> Trustee Guzzo (Vice-Chair) Mayor Gunter Clerk Szymiski Trustee Liddle Trustee Nero Trustee Brady Trustee Barker	<u>Staff</u> Village Manager May Police Chief Gunther Fire Chief Riley Deputy Chief Gruen Deputy Chief Thompson Communications Director McIntyre HR Generalist Williams Admin Assistant Saldivar PW Director Ramsey (via zoom) CD Director Sylvester (via zoom) Supv. of Admin Services Mielcarski (via zoom) Assistant to the Police Chief Olsson
<u>Visitors</u> Commissioner Stella Qualizza Chairman Bob Kovanda Commissioner Vince Musial	

- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None
- V. **APPROVAL OF JANUARY 27, 2022 POLICE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES** - Trustee Liddle made a motion to approve and Trustee Nero seconded the motion.
- VI. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Department Awards

Chief Gunther postponed the awards ceremony to the Village Board meeting at 6:00 pm to accommodate the recipients and their guests.

Chief Gunther thanked Manager May for presenting him with his 25 year anniversary plaque at the April 21st board meeting. He said that he promised himself 30 years ago that



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he would stay with the first department that offered him a job offer and he has fulfilled that promise. He appreciates that Westmont is a community that allows him to be himself and is grateful for his hard-working staff. He also thanked the Village Board for being supportive of him and the department. Mayor Gunter asked how many years of service do the Deputy Chiefs have. Deputy Chiefs Gruen and Thompson have 21 and almost 20 years of service, respectively.

Manager May asked why there was a five year difference from his decision to become a police officer to the time he was hired. Chief Gunther replied the five year difference is related to going to college and the application process. He was the last person on the eligibility list at the time and he is one of two people left from that list.

2. Staffing Update

Deputy Chief Gruen provided an update on staffing of the department. Since the last meeting, there was one more resignation, which leaves the department with three more officers to hire. A new eligibility list was established with 35 potential candidates. Mayor Gunter asked where the officers that recently resigned went. Deputy Chief Gruen replied that one decided to quit law enforcement altogether and the other officer went to a different department. Deputy Chief Gruen thanked the Fire and Police Commission for their continued hard work in the hiring process. New Probationary Police Officer Riley started the Cook County Police Academy on May 2 and is scheduled to graduate on August 18, 2022. Deputy Chief Gruen showed pictures of the recent new hires.

3. Upcoming events

Deputy Chief Gruen discussed recent and upcoming events:

- On April 30, there were two locations for the drug take back event where 210 pounds of prescription drugs were collected and were delivered to the DEA. There are drug take back boxes installed at both Police and Fire headquarters where approximately 100 pounds of drugs are collected every two or three months.
- On May 14, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, is the annual shred event benefiting the Special Olympics of Illinois. The requested donation is \$10 per box. Trustee Barker asked if there will be another shred event in the fall. Deputy Chief Gruen replied that there is a plan to have another shred event in the fall, but no date has been set.
- On June 9, from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm, is Squad Car Night. There are between 30 and 40 agencies that have signed up so far.

4. CPA and Jr. CPA

Deputy Chief Gruen stated that there will be a Citizens Police Academy Alumni (WCPAA)



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meeting on Monday, May 9, at 7:00 pm. The Citizens Police Academy (CPA) and Junior CPA classes will start at the end of September through mid November. Anyone interested should sign up online or at Squad Car Night. There will be limited seating for both classes. The CPA session this fall will include the virtual machine used for 3D scenario training that the department uses. Alumni are welcome to attend the session.

Trustee Brady asked if there was going to be a Cop on a Rooftop event this year. Deputy Chief Gruen stated that the event will occur on August 19, 2022.

Deputy Chief Gruen discussed the restructuring of the alumni organization by increasing the role of the department and assisting in rewriting the bylaws to include monthly meetings with speakers or social events if there are no speakers. There were over 30 people that attended the March meeting and the plan is to continue the participation and engagement with the alumni. Future meetings will discuss the interests of the alumni and how the department can continue to be involved with the community.

5. Compliments and Complaints on the website

Deputy Chief Thompson discussed multiple systems implemented to organize internal documents, provide public access to policies and procedures, and collect feedback from the public to be more transparent to the community. After the George Floyd incident in 2019, the department received many questions related to policies and procedures. Power DMS was installed in 2020 to organize our departmental policies and procedures and later added a public facing feature to provide public access to that information. Frontline application database, which was recently installed in the Police Department webpage, is another system used to address transparency. The application enables the public to submit both complaints and compliments. Deputy Chief Thompson demonstrated how the application worked. The robust functionality of the database will improve tracking complaints as well as compliments and has the capability to run reports for certain time periods. The Deputy Chiefs will closely monitor complaints to resolve issues and will be used for review of the officers' performance as necessary. They will also provide feedback to officers if they receive compliments.

Mayor Gunter asked if officer complaints are allowed to be disclosed in a FOIA request. Deputy Chief Thompson replied that there have not been many FOIA requests received related to officer complaints. There have been very few situations where there was a civil suit or an opposing attorney in a court case requested information on officer complaints.

Deputy Chief Thompson stated the Frontline is still in its infancy stage, and have not received any online submissions yet.



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6. MERIT Task Force update

Chief Gunther discussed the origin of MERIT and the composition of the task force with 36 local law enforcement agencies within DuPage County, of which Chief Gunther is currently the Chairman. Mayor Gunter asked if there are agencies in DuPage County that are not members of MERIT. Chief Gunther replied that there are agencies that are partially within DuPage County, such as Aurora, that are not members since most of their population is spread across multiple counties. However, there are agencies such as Naperville and Bartlett who also cross multiple counties that are members of MERIT. All members share services regardless of the size of the agency. Mayor Gunter asked if all member agencies participate and have dedicated officers assigned to the task force. Chief Gunther replied that all members pay the same annual membership fee and many agencies assign officers to various components of the task force. Most recently, the Oak Brook mall shooting incident was a great example where participation of MERIT and other agencies was crucial where not one agency could have handled the incident by themselves. With roughly 2,000 police officers in DuPage County, 300 officers who are the subject matter experts in their field participate in the MERIT task force.

Chief Gunther presented preliminary charts for FY 21-22 which summarized activations by component, hours worked by component, responses by agency, activations by agency compared to their respective population, and three-year trends for activations and participation. The annual meeting was held in April where 190 members attended. The final annual report will be presented once completed. Mayor Gunter asked if the local police department or requesting agency is in control of the incident. Chief Gunther replied that the requesting agency usually maintains control of the incident and MERIT provides assistance. The exception is the Public Integrity Team which is operated by the State's Attorney's Office. Chief Gunther described the Pratt's Wayne Woods Forest Preserve incident in January which was the largest response so far and would likely not have been solved as quickly as it did without MERIT.

Chief Gunther listed the accomplishments of the Executive Board which included:

- Established a drone team
- Established a PIO
- Created a BWC policy
- Established a mental health advisor component



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- Organized a successful fundraising campaign
 - Raised \$2 Million to purchase a mobile command vehicle and two BearCat vehicles
- Increased MERIT's name recognition
- Established a formal relationship with DMMC
 - Chief Gunther explained the rate increase passed by the MERIT members to provide necessary equipment for the growing task force and the questions raised by the Mayors and Managers of the member agencies. Mayor Gunter stated that DMMC also increased its membership fees recently. Manager May added that the Village holds a budget workshop to discuss budget requests.
- Collaborated with FBI to create an Intelligence Bulletin
 - Trustee Barker asked about the detailed press release related to the officer involved shooting. Chief Gunther replied that the State's Attorney's Office wanted to provide enough detailed information to quell any debate whether the officer was justified in his response to the incident and to show how thorough the incident was investigated.
- Entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Illinois State Police (ISP)
 - Chief Gunther explained the membership with DuPage Metropolitan Enforcement Group (DUMEG), which is the undercover narcotics task force in DuPage County run by ISP.
 - Mayor Gunter asked if there is an officer assigned to the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). Chief Gunther replied that Detective Dominguez is assigned to the DEA task force who is in her second year of a five year commitment. Mayor Gunter asked about the confiscations. Chief Gunther replied that approximately \$45,000 worth of confiscations were received last month.

Chief Gunther discussed multiple press releases of high profile cases from the State's Attorney's Office that acknowledged MERIT. The cases showed that DuPage County has a reputation of having a robust criminal justice system from prosecution to expertise in investigations to sentencing. As the second largest county in Illinois, DuPage County has a low crime rate and the agencies are committed to keep it that way.

Trustee Guzzo congratulated Chief Gunther and thanked him for doing a good job and all his hard work. Chief Gunther recognized and thanked his staff.



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VII. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Parking meters - Deputy Chief Gruen discussed that the meter project was complete. There are currently eight meters on Burlington Ave. at Williams St. and the rest have been converted to 4-hour parking from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm. The signs reflecting the new parking rules have been posted. Public Works removed the unused poles and all unusable meter heads will be surplus and eventually scrapped. Parking activity will be monitored. There are currently 40 spots that are 4-hour parking. No complaints or compliments have been received so far. Mayor Gunter asked if parking enforcement will be done. Manager May replied that enforcement is usually complaint driven and multiple parking locations will be monitored. Mayor Gunter stated that the Chamber is working with the Downtown Business Alliance to make sure that downtown parking is available.
2. Mayor Gunter asked what department awards will be presented at the board meeting. Chief Gunther replied that one of the awards is in reference to the carjacking incident that occurred in January at Suffield Gardens. The victim that was shot will attend the board meeting. Two award recipients, a good samaritan and a police officer that previously worked for Oak Brook, are out of state and will be able to view the board meeting on YouTube. Also, Officer Daniel Rooney will receive a life saving award for the same incident. Detective Durst will receive an award for being in charge of three shooting investigations in January. In addition, the Fire Department will receive a special recognition for their response to the victim of the carjacking incident.
3. Trustee Barker asked if there is content other than car safety included in the department's public service announcements on Facebook. He referenced the rape crime statistics which increased. Chief Gunther replied that the reports tracked the initial call made rather than the determination that the case was actually considered rape, therefore, the number could be misleading for this category. Trustee Barker stated that the public service announcements are very helpful for the community. Chief Gunther agreed that the department's Facebook page has been successful in providing information and transparency to the community. Trustee Guzzo added that the 9:00 pm safety reminder is very important and useful.

Chief Gunther also discussed meeting with the general managers of the local car dealerships to address car thefts. A text thread group was created to inform the car dealerships if there are any threats of theft in the area to quickly flood the zone with staff. Since the text group was created, car thefts have decreased drastically.

4. Mayor Gunter asked about the staffing required for the department. Chief Gunther replied that there were 38 sworn officers, therefore, three more officers need to be



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hired. Fire and Police Commissioner Kovanda stated that with the recent resignation, the commission will need a formal request for one more officer to hire to get to 41 authorized officers. Mayor Gunter asked how many candidates are in the eligibility list. Commissioner Kovanda replied that there were approximately 144 applications received, 104 qualified to take the test, 79 actually took the test, and only 35 passed. Interviews started last weekend. More interviews will be held on May 21.

VIII. ADJOURN Motion to adjourn by Trustee Liddle, seconded by Trustee Brady at 5:37 pm.