



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 - July 27, 2023

Approved - October 19, 2023

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

<p><u>Committee</u> Trustee Simonovich (Chair) Mayor Gunter Clerk Szymiski Trustee Liddle Trustee Nero Trustee Guzzo Trustee Barker Trustee Brady</p> <p><u>Visitors</u> None</p>	<p><u>Staff</u> Village Manager May Assistant Village Manager Parker Deputy Chief Gruen Deputy Chief Thompson Fire Chief Riley Public Works Director Ries HR Director Brainerd</p>
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- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - April 6, 2023 Police Public Safety Committee meeting minutes were approved by Motion Trustee Brady made and seconded by Trustee Nero.
- VI. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Personnel Update

DC Gruen discussed that the department is currently seeking to hire four officers. The Fire and Police Commission recently completed testing applicants and have published an eligibility list with 38 applicants. DC Gruen reviewed the application and a slightly different testing process. This year, the tests were administered virtually in small groups with proctors monitoring the test takers. Manager May asked the intern's role during the testing. DC Gruen responded that the intern took the test and is in the eligibility list. Trustee Brady asked if there are any changes to the standards required to

pass the test. DC Gruen explained that there was no change in the test administered and the requirements were not lowered. The only change was the manner in which tests were taken and application fees were waived.

DC Gruen stated that interviews for the first round of candidates will be on Saturday, July 29, 2023 with six applicants. If the applicants pass the interviews, they need to pass the polygraph tests, background checks, physical, and psychological examinations in order to get a job offer. Mayor Gunter asked if only the top six applicants on the eligibility list are interviewed. DC Gruen responded that the commissioners go through the eligibility list according to points and interview applicants until the required number of officers are hired. DC Gruen added that extra points were awarded for certified officers, college degrees, or military experience that move the applicants higher on the eligibility list. There were four certified officers that ranked on the top of the list. The list will be valid through July 2025. DC Gruen thanked the commissioners for all their hard work. Mayor Gunter asked how long the hiring process takes. DC Gruen responded that the hiring process takes at least two months after the applications are received. He added that there is very limited information about the applicants that appear on the eligibility list. Manager May asked about lateral hiring from other agencies. DC Gruen stated that other agencies are giving incentives for certified officer hires. The current Collective Bargaining Agreement pay scale addressed lateral hires in the department. Mayor Gunter asked if corrections or college officers are considered certified officers. DC Gruen responded that if the corrections officers work for a county and patrols, they would be considered certified officers. Otherwise they are not considered certified officers. Trustee Siminovich asked if the background checks provide information of any disciplinary actions. DC Gruen responded that background checks depend on what agency's HR files are shared.

For current staff, DC Gruen stated that there is one officer in the academy and will be graduating on August 17, 2023. There are two officers in field training and should be done in a couple of months. There are three officers on probation but on solo patrol. Trustee Brady asked how long is the probationary period. DC Gruen responded that the probationary period is 18 months.

Mayor Gunter asked if the officers that were involved in a recent accident are back on duty. DC Gruen responded that the two officers are back on duty.

2. Special Events

DC Gruen discussed previous and upcoming events:

- Squad car night on June 8, 2023 was successful with 107 officers and 75 vehicles.
- July 4th had 20 officers at Ty Warner park and two officers flew drones.
- Taste of Westmont peak times had an average of 15 officers on patrol.
- National Night Out will be on August 1, 2023 at Ty Warner Park in the west pavilion. The event was moved due to an increase of attendance last year. So far, there will be 22 participants attending which include local vendors and other community organizations. There will be drone demonstrations, a

bounce house, and Uncle John's music. Squad cars and the 1888 command vehicle will be in the parking lot. Hotdogs will be served. Mayor Gunter asked if the park district will provide the six-passenger vehicle for transporting people that need accommodations. DC Gruen responded that there will be designated street parking and handicap parking in the lot will be available.

- Citizens' Police Academy (CPA) will start on September 27, 2023. There are still spots available. Anyone interested can sign up online.
- Junior CPA for 12 - 15 year olds will start on September 28, 2023. There are spots still available. Anyone interested can sign up online.
- Special Olympics golf outing will be on September 15, 2023 at Village Greens Golf course in Woodridge. There is a link in the village website if anyone is interested in participating, sponsorships, or additional information. Sgt. Weibler can also provide additional information. Mayor Gunter asked if there is a time to meet for those not interested in golfing. DC Gruen responded that there is a dinner option after golfing and will start around 4:00 pm.

3. Drones

DC Gruen discussed the new drone program that was recently implemented. There are currently three licensed operators. The drones inaugural flight was on the 4th of July. Grant funds were used to purchase five drones. There will be six officers in the team. College Of DuPage offers the training class and certification testing through the FAA. Mayor Gunter commented that Chief Riley was able to discover violations when the drones were flown during the Taste of Westmont. Trustee Simonovich asked if the drones can detect heat signatures. DC Gruen responded affirmatively for one drone. He added that the five drones would be used for different purposes and provide a safety benefit to the officers. Trustee Barker asked if notices need to be posted if drones are deployed. DC Gruen responded that notices were posted when the drones were used which is required by state law.

DC Gruen listed some permissible uses according to the amended state law:

- attempting to locate a missing person, engaging in search and rescue operations, or aiding a person who cannot otherwise be safely reached,
- crime scene and traffic crash scene photography,
- conduct an infrastructure inspection of a designated building or structure at the express request of a local government agency,
- demonstrate the capabilities and functionality of a police drone for public relations purposes, provided that no information is collected or recorded by the drone during such demonstration,
- respond to calls for service from dispatch,
- routed event (parades) or special event.

Mayor Gunter asked if drones can be used for search and rescue during a fire. DC Gruen responded affirmatively. Trustee Simonovich discussed a recent incident where shots were fired and Clarendon Hills Police Department assisted to locate the suspect with their drone. DC Gruen stated that we did not have an operator available at the time of the incident and requested assistance from the MERIT drone team. He added that all

five drones are the same as MERIT's drones which helps with the interface. DC Gruen summarized the features of the five drones.

DC Gruen stated that so far, the drone has been deployed 29 times with a total of 31.64 miles flown and 10:04 hours. Mayor Gunter commented that the ability to view the drone activity in 1888 was very helpful. DC Gruen concluded that drones will be a great tool for the agency.

4. School Patrol

DC Thompson discussed school patrol to ensure safe routes to school, as well as traffic enforcement. School starts on August 17, 2023 for School District and August 24 for District 60. Mayor Gunter asked about the traffic and parking issues on Blackhawk Drive. DC Thompson and Manager May met with Westmont Junior High School staff to discuss traffic issues around pick up areas for parents, which blocks the entrance to the junior high school and creates a dangerous traffic pattern. Manager May suggested a possible restriping of the parking lot and reconfigure flow of traffic in the parking lot. Principal Amy Quattrone will discuss the options with the school board.

DC Thompson stated that the contract with Andy Frain Services for crossing guard services was extended for one year. This past school year, Andy Frain was able to staff the crossings with the appropriate number of guards more consistently, which reduced the department's need for coverage. Trustee Brady asked if Andy Frain has enough crossing guards employed for the Westmont schools. DC Thompson responded that Andy Frain hired more crossing guards and requested only intermittent assistance from patrol. Trustee Brady asked who paid for the crossing guard services. DC Thompson replied that the total cost is split in half between the Village and the three school districts. Mayor Gunter stated that the village initially paid the total cost. DC Thompson added that the school districts subsequently agreed to incrementally cover the costs from 25% to 50%. Splitting the cost inhibits schools from requesting an unlimited number of crossing guards. Miller School students used to help with crossing guard assistance.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Side Street Patrol

DC Thompson discussed traffic enforcement done especially around schools. There have been 525 side street traffic stops so far this year, which is 200 more than all of last year. 44% of the citations are stop sign violations and 30% are speeding violations. Trustee Simonovich commented on the number of violations related to driving without a license. She asked for examples of equipment violations. DC Thompson replied that the majority of equipment violations involve malfunctioning lights. Expired plates would be considered a registration violation. Most of the traffic stops are warnings for the drivers if their lights are not operational. However, if the driver cannot produce a valid driver's license, that would automatically warrant a citation. Trustee Barker recounted a violation related to a driver that had a rosary around the rearview mirror over 20 years ago. Trustee Liddle commented that drivers without insurance are also unsafe and not easily

detected. DC Thompson added that most drivers without a valid driver's license likely have no insurance. Mayor Gunter asked how long it takes to run a plate. DC Thompson replied that information on a vehicle and its registered owner, such as outstanding warrants, can be obtained very quickly but not necessarily the driver. Mayor Gunter commented that he has observed the squad car windows are open.

Trustee Nero asked if there has been an increase in citations since the installation of the license plate readers (LPR). DC Thompson replied that there has not been an increase of traffic stops related to expired or suspended licenses due to the installation of LPRs. However, there has been an increase in identifying stolen plates. The LPRs have helped solve crimes such as a recent incident where a distinguishable vehicle fled a traffic stop and was later identified by an LPR and ultimately led to an arrest. Other examples of crimes solved using LPRs are retail and car thefts.

Manager May commented that many citations were given within a short radius of the offender's primary residence. DC Thompson added that 42% of side street stops were Westmont residents. 34% of side street traffic stops were issued citations. There were more citations given on side street stops compared to major streets.

2. SAFE-T Act

DC Thompson discussed that the SAFE-T Act will be effective on September 18, 2023. The department has been ready for months. Body Worn Cameras (BWC) with fleet and interview rooms have been deployed since February 2023. Trustee Barker asked if there are governing rules in releasing or storing BWC footage. DC Thompson stated that the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) rules that govern the storage and release of BWC footage to a certain extent. BWC footage will not be released if an incident is under investigation. Unless there is an arrest, there is no obligation to release BWC footage. In-car camera footage may be released depending on the status of the investigation. Additionally, the department receives guidance from the State's Attorney's Office (SAO). SAO Berlin and Chief Gunther will discuss the incident and Chief Gunther would ultimately decide if the footage is released. The release of BWC footage was beneficial for a recent incident of an officer involved shooting in Naperville.

Mayor Gunter asked if there is an obligation to release BWC footage if the village received a FOIA request. DC Thompson replied that there is no obligation to release BWC footage if a FOIA request is received. BWC footage is an exemption from FOIA. If an arrest is made, BWC footage may be released. An email request is considered FOIA.

3. Services Offered

DC Gruen discussed services offered by the department which include sharps and prescription drug disposal, car seat installations, fingerprints for employment with a \$10 fee, vacation watch requests, and a safe exchange zone. Sign up for car seat installation and vacation watch requests are available online in the village website.

Police Public Safety Committee Meeting

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(next meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2023)