



**Village of Westmont
VILLAGE BOARD**

31 West Quincy Street, Westmont, Illinois 60559

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Village Board Police Public Safety Committee

Westmont Village Hall - 31 West Quincy Street

Meeting Minutes - October 19, 2023

Approved - January 25, 2024

- 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 Szymski Trustee Liddle Trustee Guzzo Trustee Barker</p> <p><u>Visitors</u> None</p>	<p><u>Staff</u> Village Manager May Assistant Village Manager Parker Police Chief Gunther Deputy Chief Gruen Deputy Chief Thompson Fire Chief Riley Public Works Director Ries HR Generalist Williams</p>
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- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None
- V. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** - July 27, 2023 Police Public Safety Committee meeting minutes were approved by Motion Trustee Liddle made and seconded by Trustee Barker.
- VI. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - None
- VII. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - 1. **Department Awards and Recognition**
Chief Gunther presented service awards to Ofc. David Hamblin for 20 years of service and Sgt. Timothy Radtke for 25 years of service at the Village of Westmont.
 - 2. **School Safety Plan**
Chief Gunther introduced Detective Jeremy Durst who has served as the School Resource Officer and Juvenile Detective for the past three years. Detective Jeremy Durst presented the school safety plan which included an overview of the

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phases of emergency management. Mayor Gunter asked if the school safety plans were implemented at all the schools in Westmont. Detective Durst responded that the safety plans were for all the school districts in Westmont. At the beginning of each school year, a walk-thru with the schools and the Fire department is conducted to evaluate and assess school safety procedures. Recommendations from the DuPage Regional Board of Education/Safety Committee are discussed with District 201 Safety Board semi annually. A new security system was recently implemented in District 201 which has more robust functionality than the previous system. District 60 is considering the new system. The emergency response plan has been standardized throughout DuPage County schools. Mandatory safety drills are performed throughout the year which are supervised by law enforcement with the Fire department having mapping programs of the schools on their phones. Mayor Gunter asked if Holy Trinity Catholic School is included in school safety board meetings. Detective Durst confirmed that Holy Trinity School is included in the meetings. He added that each school board has a separate safety board. The DuPage County Regional Board of Education established standardized language for all schools and worked with DuPage law enforcement to implement a standardized response to different threat scenarios. Law enforcement conducts mandatory full scale active threat scenario based training with fire departments, Emergency Management Systems, and the school districts which have been beneficial for communication between the different agencies. In addition, there are mutual aid agreements with Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System (ILEAS) and MERIT to assist with emergency response situations. Components of the recovery plan were identified.

Detective Durst also discussed the parking issues and complaints at Westmont Junior High School which have improved. Additional parking signs were posted and extra enforcement has been implemented. Traffic issues at Manning School improved by switching the car line on North Linden Avenue. Detective Durst works with all the schools every school day to ensure open communications, address any safety issues or concerns, and monitor parking. Mayor Gunter asked if the preschool and daycare facilities are included in the school visits. Detective Durst responded that preschool and daycare facilities, as well as other private businesses, requested active shooter training. He scheduled training as much as his schedule allowed and has continued to accommodate additional requests for walk throughs and safety presentations. Mayor Gunter asked if Detective Durst performed tornado drills with the schools. Detective Durst does not perform tornado drills. Fire Chief Riley stated that fire drills are mandatory, however tornado drills are not mandatory. Detective Durst added that the DuPage County Regional Board of Education is requiring all mandatory drills be performed before November.

Trustee Simonovich thanked Detective Durst for his efforts and conveyed positive feedback from all the schools and parents. Chief Gunther also thanked Detective Durst for all his efforts.

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VIII. REPORTS

1. Committee Chair

Chair Simonovich - no report

2. Department Director

Chief Gunther - no report

3. Division Reports

1. Administration

a) Staffing update

DC Gruen discussed the current status of staffing for the department. Patrol still needs five officers. There is one scheduled to attend the academy in January and there are two backgrounds in progress. The Fire and Police Commission are working on scheduling more interviews. They are halfway through the current eligibility list. The department appreciates all of their hard work.

b) Special events update

- DC Gruen discussed the Special Olympics fundraising effort for the year. The initial goal was \$30,000. So far, \$41,187 has been raised thanks to the hard work and dedication of Sgt. Weibler who is the liaison for the Torch Run. The last fundraising event of the year is the Shred Event on Saturday, October 21, 2023.
- Drug Take Back is on Saturday, October 28, 2023 at the Police Department and Mariano's. There is a new narcotics collection box in the Police Department lobby.

Trustee Barker asked if other departments are also experiencing shortage in staffing. DC Gruen confirmed that most departments are hiring and the police academies are overwhelmed with requests for classes. Mayor Gunter asked how many sworn officers are in the department. DC Gruen responded that there were 36 sworn officers. Manager May stated that the F&P Commission is authorized to hire up to 41 officers to offset attrition. Chief Gunther added that there has been an increase in substandard officers or candidates transferring from department to department which prolongs background checks and delays the hiring process.

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Trustee Barker asked about the Aurora Police Department's ability to hire hundreds of officers yet our department is challenged with hiring 41 officers. Chief Gunther responded that Aurora offered very high signing bonuses and more upward mobility for management positions since they have a bigger pool of officers serving a much larger population. He added that there has been a shift of mentality from officers desiring overtime pay versus time off. Mayor Gunter asked if the department's shortage percentage is consistent with other departments. Chief Gunther confirmed that almost all departments nationwide are understaffed. He cited that Chicago and Washington, D.C. are short hundreds of officers. Staff recruitment and retention are significant challenges of the department.

2. Patrol

Chief Gunther provided an update on BWC since the program was deployed in February 2023, which is almost two years ahead of the state mandated implementation date of January 2025. Chief Gunther discussed the positive impact of BWCs especially related to officer complaints.

Since 2021, there have been eight officer complaints. Four of those complaints were submitted in 2023, where three were captured in BWCs. None of the four complaints were sustained, which indicates that the officers acted appropriately. Using the footage from the BWCs shortened the duration of investigating complaints and has strengthened the defense of the officers. The officers are accustomed to using BWCs and the multiple triggers that activate the BWCs.

Mayor Gunter asked if and when FOIA requests can be made to view BWC footage. Chief Gunther stated requests have been made to view BWC footage. There are different rules that apply in releasing BWC footage, however if there is no custodial arrest, BWC footage can be withheld. Chief Gunther cited an example where a request for BWC footage was denied since there was no one in custody, however the in-car camera footage was released since in-car camera footage is not held under the same standard as BWC footage. Processing of BWC footage can be lengthy since the Records Division has to redact images of individuals or actions depending on the case. Trustee Simonovich asked if there is a risk of losing public trust if requests to view BWC

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footage are denied. Chief Gunther did not think there is a risk of losing public trust since the department complies with FOIA rules. When records are released, no additional information is beyond what is requested. Manager May added that the FOIA statute is defined which forces the department to comply with any information released.

3. Investigations - No report

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Truck Parking Update - DC Thompson discussed the complaints of truck parking especially around 59th Street, Vandustrial Drive and other residential areas in Westmont. After reviewing the code of ordinances, there is no ordinance restricting parking of commercial vehicles on a public roadway in residential areas. As a result, DC Thompson and Community Development Deputy Director Vitell consulted with other municipalities and drafted a proposed ordinance addressing the parking issue. The proposed ordinance will be presented to the Board for approval after Attorney Zemenak reviews the draft. In the meantime, overnight parking fines are still being imposed. Mayor Gunter asked the amount of the overnight parking fine. DC Thompson replied that the fine starts at \$30 per ticket. If the vehicle receives more than five tickets, the fine goes up to \$100 per ticket. Complaints usually increase around the holidays.

DC Thompson also discussed the truck parking complaints from businesses around Vandustrial Drive. Citations have been issued, but offenders are still parking their trucks. Sgt. Rainaldi worked with Deputy Director Vitell and drafted a letter referencing the nuisance ordinance that the property owners, instead of the truck owners, will receive a citation for trucks parked on Vandustrial Drive. Sgt. Rainaldi personally delivered the letters to the business owners on Vandustrial Drive and received positive feedback. DC Thompson will review the activity for the next month to six weeks and follow up with property owners.

Trustee Liddle asked Trustee Simonovich if there were any more parking issues on Wilmette. Trustee Simonovich responded that the parking is better. Chief Gunther added that CSO Terry wrote parking tickets in the area to enforce the parking ordinance. Trustee Liddle agreed that the parking area looks better.

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2. Trustee Simonovich asked if there were concerns raised from Islamic organizations about safety? Chief Gunther replied that there were concerns raised and DC Thompson communicated with the concerned citizen. Extra security and patrols have been assigned at certain religious institutions in the community. DC Thompson discussed the mosque parking sign issue. As a result of the parking issue, a request was made for traffic control in that area on a certain day of the week to enforce parking and not burden the neighborhood with increased parking and traffic. Trustee Simonovich stated that she was concerned about people running across 55th Street. DC Thompson agreed to work with the organization to identify times that will require traffic assistance.
 3. Trustee Guzzo asked if side street patrols are ongoing. Chief Gunther replied that side street patrols are continuously monitored and tracked. Trustee Guzzo observed that many offenders are residents.
 4. Trustee Guzzo thanked the press release for publishing information about trick or treating. Chief Gunther credited Communications Director McIntyre.
 5. Trustee Guzzo thanked the department for all its efforts keeping the neighborhoods and the community safe.
- X. **ADJOURN** - Approved by Motion Trustee Liddle made and seconded by Trustee Barker at 5:40 p.m. (next meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2024)