



POLICE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Hybrid Virtual Meeting

Meeting Minutes - June 23, 2021

[Draft to be Approved - September 22, 2021](#)

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - Mayor Gunter called the meeting to order at 9:00 am
- II. **ROLL CALL**

<u>Committee</u> Mayor Gunter (as chair) Trustee Liddle	<u>Staff</u> Village Manager May Assistant Village Manager/Finance Director Parker Police Chief Gunther Deputy Chief Gruen Deputy Chief Thompson Sergeant Gomorczak Sergeant Borgardt Investigative Aide Whitehead PPO Vincent <u>Visitors</u> Intern Lundgren Assistant to the Chief Olsson
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- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None
- V. **APPROVAL OF MARCH 24, 2021 POLICE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE MINUTES** - Trustee Liddle made a motion to approve and Mayor Gunter seconded the motion.
- VI. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - 1. **Department 20 Year Service Recognition**
 - a) Chief Gunther introduced new hire Probationary Police Officer Hunter Vincent and Intern Robbie Lundgren from Western Illinois University who were in attendance.
 - b) Chief Gunther presented the 20 year service plaque to Officer Jason Gritzenbach and thanked him for 20 years of dedicated service to the Village of Westmont.
 - 2. **Creation of New Sergeant Position**

Chief Gunther discussed the request for an additional sergeant to complement the



relief sergeant to make a total of nine sergeants. The request is in the July 1, 2021 Village Board meeting agenda. Once approved by the board, the Fire and Police Commission will select from the top three officers in the sergeant eligibility list who are Detective Ryan, Officer Hausner, and DEA Task Force Officer Dominguez, respectively. Chief Gunther stated with the addition of seven new officers since January, 75% of the patrol officers have less than five years of experience.

- a) Manager May commented that the position was reviewed structurally and operationally and concluded that the position was warranted.
- b) Mayor Gunter asked how long the process of selecting a relief sergeant will take. Chief Gunther responded that the process should be quick after board approval. Since the Fire and Police Commission meet regularly, they might be able to make the selection by mid July.

3. Staffing Update

Deputy Chief Gruen stated that the department needs seven officers to meet the approved level of staffing. There are two officers in field training and they should complete the training by July or August. There are three new hire officers, two conditional offers pending, and one in the background phase. The new hires will attend the police academy at the end of August.

4. Upcoming Probationary Officer Testing

Deputy Chief Gruen stated the candidate in the background phase is the last person on our eligible list of candidates from January 2021. The list had 58 candidates, of which four have been hired thus far. The Fire and Police Commission has scheduled an officer test on July 31, 2021. We are currently accepting applications. Deputy Chief Gruen acknowledged and thanked the hard work that the Fire and Police Commission have done in the past few months. They conducted an officer test in November 2020 and sergeant promotion test in January 2021.

- a) Manager May also recognized the Fire and Police Commissioners' efforts with the Fire Department staffing requirements.

Deputy Chief Gruen stated with the upcoming retirement in July 2021, the department will need to hire at least one candidate from the new list of candidates from the July test.



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b) Mayor Gunter asked if other departments in the area are also experiencing similar issues with low numbers of applicants. Deputy Chief Gruen responded that there are not as many people applying and testing. Other departments are offering incentives for certified officers. In addition, there are reduced spots available in the police academy due to COVID. There are over 100 people on the waitlist for the Cook County Police Academy in August. Fortunately, we have five spots guaranteed. Deputy Chief Gruen acknowledged the phenomenal job that Sergeant Gomorczak has done to schedule the academy for our department.

5. Summer Events Update - Deputy Chief Gruen adjusted the agenda to discuss the summer events before the legislation updates.

Deputy Chief Gruen listed the upcoming events which include the 4th of July celebration and the Taste of Westmont where police staff will be present. There is a social event tonight to reconnect with the Westmont Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association, along with other members of the public. On August 3rd, we will host National Night Out/Open House. On August 20th, Coffee for Champions for Special Olympics, formerly known as Cop on a Rooftop, will be held at the Dunkin' locations on Ogden and on 63rd Street. On September 2nd, we will have Squad Car Night. The Citizens Police Academy will start on September 29, and will be limited to twenty five people. Lastly, the Junior Citizens Police Academy will start on September 28. Detective Durst, our School Resource Officer along with Ms. Quattrone from Westmont Junior High, will be the coordinator of the program which is geared towards twelve to fifteen year olds. The program also serves as community service points for the participants.

a) Manager May asked if the Junior Citizens Police Academy is organized and administered similar to the Citizens Police Academy and if the program is affiliated with a specific school. Deputy Chief Gruen responded that the program is through the Westmont Police Department. Ms. Quattrone will assist in the program and is involved with the community service aspect and the promotion of the program. Chief Gunther responded that the program is open to all residents, not just Westmont Junior High School students.

6. Police Reform Legislation Update

Deputy Chief Thompson discussed the SAFE-T Act that passed on January 13, 2021.



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The language of the SAFE-T Act, specially related to use of force and body-worn cameras, were opposed by the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police. Since then, a trailer bill passed on March 31, 2021, which revised and clarified the ambiguous language from the SAFE-T Act. The chokehold definition was clarified as intentionally reducing intake of air instead of any contact above the shoulders. Therefore, officers can make contact with the head or neck to subdue an offender as long as the intention is not to reduce intake of air. The trailer bill removed language prohibiting tasers to be aimed only to certain parts of the body, especially the back. The trailer bill removed language related to restricting immediate arrest depending on the type of crime. The trailer bill includes mental health screening for officers, which will require the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board to create new training programs and will be effective January 1, 2022. Another change to the SAFE-T Act is related to the language combining obstructing and resisting with underlying offense. This language was clarified and now only resisting requires an underlying offense, which basically matches the traditional definition we have worked with for several years.

Deputy Chief Thompson discussed that the biggest change from the SAFE-T Act relates to the body-worn camera section. The original bill did not allow officers to review the footage from their own body-worn camera in order to create their arrest report. It was considered a Class 3 Felony if the body-worn camera was not activated regardless of reason. The trailer bill clarified that the camera had to be intentionally inactivated to warrant a violation.

- a) Manager May asked if there were sections in the trailer bill that had a more negative impact on the SAFE-T Act. Deputy Chief Thompson responded that there were no areas that were made worse by the trailer bill. There were sections that were delayed such as qualified immunity.
- b) Manager May asked if there was a reason our representative was not in favor of the trailer bill legislation. Chief Gunther replied that he was not given a reason why our representative was not in favor of the trailer bill.
- c) Deputy Chief Thompson discussed that there is still an outstanding issue related to funding for the mandatory training, the cost of equipment and storage for the footage from the body-worn cameras.

7. Body-Worn Camera Update

Deputy Chief Thompson discussed the process of selecting a vendor for the



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body-worn cameras, squad car cameras, and detective interview room equipment. Axon was selected since their equipment met the requirements for the department. The estimate for body-worn cameras over the next five years will cost the Village approximately \$413,000. The first year will cost approximately \$85,000 and the next four years will cost approximately \$82,000 per year. The estimate will provide body-worn cameras for all sworn officers except for administration and unlimited storage of data. The contract allows for upgrades due to new technology.

- a) Mayor Gunter asked if the estimate includes maintenance of the equipment. Deputy Chief Thompson responded that maintenance is included in the five year contract.
- b) Trustee Liddle asked if the upgrade will apply to all officers or only apply to new officers. Deputy Chief Thompson responded that the entire department will receive upgraded equipment as they become available.
- c) Chief Gunther stated that the implementation of body-worn cameras is mandated by the state and will be ongoing. The department has access to the DEA Fund which could possibly fund the initial first year purchase. Future years need to be budgeted in the Capital Fund. Chief Gunther pointed out that there will be additional operational expenses due to the implementation of body-worn cameras beyond the purchase of equipment.
- d) Manager May asked if the equipment would interface with the county. Chief Gunther responded that Axon does interface with the county's systems. Deputy Chief Thompson responded that there are other brands, such as Panasonic, that do not currently interface with the county's systems.
- e) Manager May asked the deadline for the implementation. Deputy Chief Thompson responded that due to the size of the department, the body-worn cameras need to be installed on or before January 1, 2025.
- f) Mayor Gunter asked about the timing of implementation. Deputy Chief Thompson responded that Axon estimated between six to eight months for implementation.
- g) Manager May asked if the DEA Fund can cover the initial costs if the project can start this fiscal year. Assistant Village Manager Parker responded that the project has been budgeted in the Capital Fund this fiscal year.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS - None

VIII. ADJOURN Motion to adjourn by Trustee Liddle, seconded by Mayor Gunter 9:43 am (next meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2021).