

Village of Peoria Heights
Departmental Committee Meeting
August 1, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Everyone stood for a moment of silence and the Pledge to the Flag.

Upon calling roll, the following Trustees were present: Sarah DeVore, Jeff Goett, Elizabeth Khazzam, Mark Gauf, and Brandon Wisenburg. Others present included Mayor Michael Phelan, Administrator Sutton, Deputy Village Clerk Sarah Witbracht, Superintendent Chris Chandler, and Director of Community Development Wayne Aldrich. Trustee Wigginton was absent.

Trustee Goett made a motion to approve the minutes from the Board of Trustees Meeting held on July 18, 2023, and the motion seconded by Trustee Wisenburg. Motion passed 5-0.

Deputy Clerk Sarah Witbracht read correspondence from a group of citizens opposing the planned contract with the City of Peoria. The letter will be filed with the Board of Trustees documents.

There was public comment as follows:

- Greg Walters, 800 Toledo, stated his opposition with the Peoria Fire Department and read a letter asking for reconsideration and to reject the proposal and explore other options.
- Raymond Lockhart, 722 E Marietta, stated support for Greg Walters letter and requested that the board consider the public safety aspect and to please compare facts.
- Mary Bair, 5016 Clarendon, stated she has a copy of an email from the Peoria Fire Chief and read it to the board. The letter contained dialogue stating favor for the Peoria Fire Department. She questioned the trustees who voted in favor of Peoria FD pressing them to please become educated with response times.
- Jody Ford, 4004 Illinois, inquired if any trustees approached Peoria to explore the contract. Trustee DeVore stated that she did consult the City of Peoria because she did receive complaints regarding the Peoria Heights Fire Department and therefore approached administration with the complaints. Administrator Sutton stated that he did explore options because Trustee DeVore asked for options with the City of Peoria. Mayor Phelan clarified that the administrator works for all trustees. Jody also pointed out that the City of Peoria has recently had injuries because they are overworked and concerned they cannot take on additional workload.
- Heather McNeeten of 3820 Monroe shared her history as a paramedic and that she stands with first responders. She encouraged the board to please let the first responders of Peoria Heights share their side of the story and prepare a presentation. She also shared words of encouragement with the first responders.
- A resident of 505 Division stated her support of the Peoria Heights Fire Department as that is why she has moved to the Village of Peoria Heights. She is encouraging the board to please consider investing in our own services. She also pointed out that the Peoria Heights Fire Department recently received an award.
- Mary Phillips of 5119 Prospect stated her support for the Board of Trustees but has recently grown concerned of the decisions by them. She is asking everyone to please not let our community be split over one vote.

- Terry Simpkins, 1212 Sciota, has lived in Peoria Heights for 71 years and stated that he is not interested in investing in the City of Peoria Fire Department and shared that Peoria Heights Fire Department saved his life.
- Alexis Khazzam of 4831 Grandview Drive questioned the economical perspective of the issue stating that the Board of Trustees needs to have a budget and that a tax should be assessed to help pay for it.
- Norm Reichert of 5016 Glen Elm questioned water quality issues and his history with Peoria Heights administration.
- Jeanette Gruber of 3814 N Monroe explained she has a business in Peoria Heights and does not support outsourcing the Peoria Heights Fire Department and would like decisions to be researched.
- Adam Heiner of 1107 Duryea is a new resident and witnessed a false alarm go off in his neighborhood and noted a very fast response time. He stated his support for the Peoria Heights Fire Department.
- Dalton Carlson, 5133 Montclair, stated that he is talking from the perspective of a citizen and has seen a lot of positive changes since he has lived here, but has seen declining water services, infrastructure, and public safety.
- Mike Woo of 2118 Roosevelt shared that he recently retired from the Peoria Heights Fire Department. He suffered a lot of burnouts from not having enough volunteers but stated it was an honor to serve.
- A resident from Springfield inquired why the residents were not involved in the vote. She stated her support for the Peoria Heights Fire Department. Trustee Wisenburg clarified that the most cost-effective option that was proposed by the Peoria Heights Fire Department was his suggested option.
- Floyd Wombacher of 5103 Glen Elm Drive stated his support for the Board of Trustees and the Peoria Heights Fire Department and asked the board to please review all options.
- James Sawyer of 5819 Galena Road inquired if there is documentation outlining response times between the City of Peoria and Village of Peoria Heights asking for stipulations in the City of Peoria contract.
- Jen Reichert of 5028 Glen Elm stated her history involvement with the Peoria Heights Grade School and explained that Mr. Roger Bergia would have also fought for the Peoria Heights Fire Department. She explained there is time to fight for the Fire Department and that the legacy lies within Peoria Heights.

Trustee Wisenburg wanted to discuss the previous vote from the last meeting regarding the fire department. He thanked everyone who came out tonight to support the Village of Peoria Heights Fire Department. He has collected over 200 signatures to support them. He expressed doubt about the City of Peoria's response times. Mayor Phelan stated that the PHFD can make a presentation at any time. Mayor Phelan explained that interviews are happening and a Fire Chief name will be presented next week. Trustee Wisenburg made a motion to rescind previous board action, get a presentation from the Peoria Heights Fire department, and revisit the vote afterwards. Trustee Goett seconded. The vote approved 4-1 with Trustee Khazzam voting nay. Mayor Phelan confirmed this will be placed on the August 15 agenda. Trustee Khazzam stated that everyone's priority is public safety, and she feels the vote was unfair with Trustee Wigginton and Attorney Walton absent. She feels strongly about preserving the volunteer fire department and believes that partnering with the City of Peoria will help strengthen the Peoria Heights Fire Department. She stated that there is a surplus for the Village of

Peoria Heights but stated it won't solve infrastructure, water, and fire. She stated these decisions aren't easy. She also stated she will never vote to take on pension debt.

Trustee Khazzam made a motion to approve Ordinance 2023-1707: an Ordinance Approving and Authorizing the Execution of a BDD No. 1 Redevelopment Agreement by and Between the Village of Peoria Heights and Hugh Higgins, DBA Hearth Restaurant. Trustee DeVore seconded the motion which was approved 5-0. Hugh Higgins gave a brief overview of the project.

Director Wayne Aldrich gave an update on the METEC grant and explained that the Village of Peoria Heights is currently organizing that program. Residents of the area should be aware that we will be soliciting in the area.

Trustee Wisenburg made a motion to approve the street closures of the 1200 Block of Kingman Ave and 4900 Block of Prospect Rd. from Glen Ave to Kingman Ave. Trustee DeVore seconded the motion which was approved 5-0. Chamber of Commerce members Barb Milaccio and Theresa McDade came forward to give an update on the 125th Anniversary Celebration. They stated they are looking for volunteers.

Trustee Devore stated that she will be meeting with Discover Peoria next Tuesday, August 8 and she will be ready to give an update at the August 15 meeting.

Trustee Wisenburg had questions regarding penalties for marijuana.

Trustee Goett made a motion to adjourn, and Trustee DeVore seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Michael Phelan, Mayor

Sarah Witbracht, Deputy Village Clerk